

# Club Red

Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream



Diane P. Koenker

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DIANE P. KOENKER

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*For Hannah, Joshua, and Eleanor*



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## Abbreviations

GAGS	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv goroda Sochi
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii
<i>KP</i>	<i>Komsomol'skaia pravda</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>Literaturnaia gazeta</i>
Narkompros	Narodnyi Kommissariat Prosveshcheniia
<i>NSNM</i>	<i>Na Sushe i na more (On Land and On Sea)</i>
OPTE	Obshchestvo Proletarskogo Turizma i Ekskursii
RGAKFD	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov
RGASPI	Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii
Sovtur	Sovetskii Turist
TEU	Turistsko-ekskursionnoe upravlenie
TsAGM	Tsentral'nyi arkhiv goroda Moskvu
TsGAMO	Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Moskovskoi oblasti
TsGA SPb	Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt Peterburga



*Club Red*



## Introduction

# Vacations, Tourism, and the Paradoxes of Soviet Culture

In November 1966, leading Soviet personalities described their ideal vacations for a feature in a central newspaper. The economist Abel Aganbegian, who would become one of the architects of perestroika, wrote about rafting down the rivers of Siberia as a strenuous but restorative encounter with wild nature. The poet Rimma Kazakova lamented that people of her generation (although she was born in 1932, the same year as Aganbegian) did not really know how to vacation: you have to learn how to do it, she wrote, whether relaxing on the beach or skiing through the woods on a winter's day. S. Antonov, a metal fitter and hero of socialist labor, rejoiced in his access to vacations. "I receive my vacation once a year," he wrote, "and I try not to waste a single day of it in idleness. Of course, it's important to restore your energy, but the vacation should also be used to produce memories that will last the whole year." He recalled with great satisfaction his tourist trip of two years earlier to the Caucasus, where he explored the region's mountains, valleys, and cities. Wherever he traveled, he always brought along his mandolin so that there would be music, and he traveled with friends so there would always be good company.<sup>1</sup>

This feature appeared at the end of a year in which the newspaper had polled its readers about how they too wished to spend their summer vacations, whether in stationary repose at sanatoria or rest homes or on the road as tourists in search of sights and adventure. This concern with the annual vacation was part of new attention devoted by sociologists, economists, and political leaders to the "problem of leisure," a signal that the time of sacrifice had ended, that work was not an end in itself but a means to a more beautiful and rounded life, that free time was just as important as work in shaping the Soviet personality, and that the promise of communism would be fulfilled when Soviet citizens' leisure and consumer desires could be completely satisfied.<sup>2</sup>

1. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* (hereinafter *KP*), 23 November 1966.

2. L. Gordon and E. Klopov, *Man after Work: Social Problems of Daily Life and Leisure Time, Based on the Surveys of Workers' Time Budgets in Major Cities of the European Part of the USSR*, trans. John Bushnell and Christine Bushnell (Moscow, 1975), 10; B. Grushin, *Svobodnoe vremia: Aktual'nye problemy* (Moscow, 1967).



From 1970 to 1975, Soviet investment in vacation and leisure travel facilities would quadruple, and the number of its citizens enjoying an annual vacation away from home, whether domestic or foreign, would continue to increase. As the testimony of the Soviet celebrities noted above indicates, individuals were able to vacation in different ways, and they could assign different meanings and values to their vacations.

This book explores the history of socialist vacationing, including tourism, in the Soviet Union from the 1920s to the mid-1980s, a sixty-year span. Soviet histories rightfully emphasize dramatic episodes of violence, repression, and fear, and these histories reveal the magnitude of the horrors of war, of political purges, and of the Gulag. The Soviet regime notoriously controlled the mobility of its citizens through passport restrictions and incarceration, and it forcibly relocated hundreds of thousands in the name of economic development. But there is another side of Soviet history that requires telling in order to explain the relationship between the state and its people as well as the resilience of the communist regime and its values. This history of tourism and vacations is a story of the system and society that the original communists aspired to build, how they envisioned and implemented that society, and how people lived their lives under socialism.

This history explores three key aspects of the Soviet experience. It demonstrates the contested transition of that country from a producer to a consumer society, revealing how the regime and its citizens negotiated the search for the “good life” and how both cooperated to implement this transition. It emphasizes a distinctive blend of purpose and pleasure in Soviet vacation policy and practice. And finally, it explores a fundamental paradox of the Soviet idea: how and why an authoritarian state promoted the individual autonomy and selfhood of its subjects through the instrument of vacations and tourism.

Histories of tourism and vacations in the West speak to the role of consumption in modern capitalist societies, and like them, this book explores the growth of a maturing consumer culture in the Soviet Union. Consumption itself is both a means of individuation and an economic activity that promotes national economic growth. As Adam Smith famously wrote, “Consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production,” and even in the Soviet Union’s earliest years, it was the vision of the good life of abundance and comfort under true communism that justified short-term sacrifices and the involuntary suppression of living standards that characterized the Soviet economy until the 1950s.<sup>3</sup> Theorists of consumption speak about the “use value” and the “sign value” of commodities: both are intimately bound up in consumer choices.<sup>4</sup> Early Soviet consumption policy privileged utility: by

3. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (New York, 1937), 625.

4. Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (New York, 1979); Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New

emphasizing only useful consumption it would eliminate wasteful “conspicuous” consumption and maximize the welfare of Soviet citizens. Yet early in the Soviet regime, access to consumer goods became an essential part of a system of incentives that encouraged citizens to make choices that benefited both them and the state. The best workers and state actors received privileged access to goods and services, including leisure. The state also used consumer goods, again including leisure travel, to help craft a model Soviet person, a cultured consumer and cultured citizen.

By the 1950s, when the post-Stalin regime elevated consumption to a primary goal of the state economy, that economy had diversified to the point that Soviet consumers had the luxury of choice, and as Susan Reid has argued, they used the goods and services that they chose to project an image of themselves, to distinguish themselves not invidiously but as modern, self-activating individuals.<sup>5</sup> This book demonstrates that the process of becoming tourists, learning how to take a socialist vacation, constituted one of the paths toward consuming the Soviet good life.

At the same time, this look at Soviet tourism over the span of the country’s existence reveals how the centrally planned economy thwarted and shaped the aspirations and everyday practices of its people. The economic mechanisms of socialism, although they produced historic levels of growth and a rising standard of living, especially after 1945, never managed to satisfy the growing demands of the Soviet people. The economy of shortages affected the consumption of leisure as well as of goods. The regime’s inability to satisfy its citizens’ consumer desires led to the reform era in the 1980s known as perestroika, which paradoxically hastened the end of the search for utopia through socialism and central planning.

What we think of in our modern capitalist context as “tourism” or “vacations” existed in the Soviet Union in two distinct forms. Rest, or *otdykh*, was meant to be taken in a stationary, medicalized institution such as a sanatorium in a health spa, the *kurort*, or in a rest home located in a natural area, preferably near water. *Turizm* initially connoted a physically active form of leisure, involving travel to see natural wonders and social attractions through self-locomotion, by foot, bicycle, canoe, or rowboat. From the 1920s and well

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York, 1899); Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008); Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London, 1970).

5. Susan E. Reid, “Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernization in the Soviet Home,” *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47, no. 2–3 (2006): 227–268; see also Elena Osokina, *Our Daily Bread: Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin’s Russia, 1927–1941* (Armonk, NY, 2001); Jukka Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin’s Russia* (Oxford, 2003); Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917–1953* (Princeton, NJ, 2004); Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935–1941* (Cambridge, 1988), chap. 6; Marjorie Hilton, *Selling to the Masses: Retailing in Russia, 1880–1930* (Pittsburgh, 2011).

into the 1950s, the health spa vacation was the norm. Before 1917, it was the habit of aristocrats to take the waters in Kislovodsk or savor the sea breezes in Yalta, and the revolution sought to make these pleasures accessible to the laboring classes. In establishing its own system of annual leisure, the Soviet Union built on the models already known to it, and the Soviet spa vacation tried to capture the aura of this imagined aristocratic legacy.

Yet unlike their aristocratic predecessors, both Soviet tourism and Soviet spa vacations were distinguished by a high degree of purposefulness. In the beginning, the point of the vacation was not to provide individual pleasure but to allow the vacationers to recover their health and energy and return to production stronger than before. The productive, medical side of vacations, even for tourists, remained strongly embedded in Soviet travel culture, and the balance between pleasure and purpose usually favored the latter. Sunbathing, for example, was a medical procedure, strictly monitored by medical personnel. Tourists on hiking trips needed a medical certificate to guarantee their fitness for the journey. The success of a rest home vacation was measured by the number of kilograms the vacationer had gained through the home's healthy diet. Soviet vacationers expected to receive cultural uplift and education: in this respect, they had much in common with Western tourists today who seek to learn about the cultures and places they encounter. "It is not enough to see," writes the sociologist Jean-Didier Urbain. "It is also necessary to see *well*." Only through travel can the tourist learn to appreciate what is different and what is beautiful.<sup>6</sup> Domestic tourism, both capitalist and socialist, helped to inspire patriotism, whether through visiting sites of natural beauty like the Grand Canyon or the mountains of Dagestan, or sites of national remembrance such as the battlefields of Flanders or the trails of the Crimean partisans. Soviet tourist bases and health resorts favored cultural programs over "mindless" entertainment as essential accompaniments to their daily routines, but in this they shared the larger agenda of modern self-improving tourism.

The quest for *meaning* in leisure travel, in both tourism and rest, constituted an important part of the purposeful Soviet vacation experience. The cultivation of Soviet values and norms would eliminate "vulgar" or "bourgeois" consumer practices, and it fell to the tourism activists and health spa managers to define and police appropriate norms and behaviors. Indeed, one element of the history of Soviet tourism, as we shall see, was a running battle between activists who favored energetic, rugged, and purposeful travel, not wasting "a single day in idleness," and officials who believed that calm repose was the appropriate form of recuperation from the working year. By the late 1960s, however, officials began to defer to the consumers themselves as the arbiters of taste and choice, confident perhaps that the new Soviet person had been fully formed and could be trusted to apply Soviet norms on his or her own.

6. Jean-Didier Urbain, *L'Idiot du Voyage: Histoires de Touristes* (Paris, 1991), 65.

Historians of tourism emphasize the nation-building aspects of leisure travel, whether under democratic or authoritarian systems. Even in liberal democratic regimes, tourism and vacations occupied an important place on purposeful national agendas. Marguerite Shaffer argues that in the period from 1880 to 1940, the U.S. government actively promoted tourism as a key element of American citizenship and that the middle-class tourist experience gave birth to a national culture in the United States.<sup>7</sup> In many places, state agencies took an active part in promoting tourist travel as an engine of economic growth as well as a means of projecting national power.<sup>8</sup> In his study of the post-1945 United States program to develop France as an American tourist destination, Christopher Endy shows how even travel abroad could support domestic and national goals. Sending Americans to Paris was part of the Marshall Plan's project to rebuild European economies and thereby to stave off communist influence. But paradoxically and perhaps by plan, he writes, foreign travel "did not necessarily yield new transnational identities but more often reinforced distinctly national identities."<sup>9</sup>

In the twentieth century, militantly nationalist regimes actively promoted tourism and leisure travel as a means to consolidate a national community inclusive of previously stratified elements. In fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, state-affiliated agencies, the *Dopolavoro* (After Work) and *Kraft durch Freude* (KdF, Strength through Joy), organized and coordinated an extensive range of leisure activities. KdF, Shelley Baranowski writes, became a mass packager of tourist travel for middle- and working-class Germans in the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> In its programming the organization rejected the quest for personal pleasure but emphasized collectivity: "one was to contemplate the sublime, cultivate comradeship with one's fellow tourists, improve one's education by study-

7. Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880–1940* (Washington, DC, 2001), 2–6; see also Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (Oxford, 1999), 130; Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, DC, 1995); and John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (Amherst, MA, 1989).

8. John Beckerson, "Marketing British Tourism: Government Approaches to the Stimulation of a Service Sector," in *The Making of Modern Tourism: The Cultural History of the British Experience, 1600–2000*, ed. Hartmut Berghoff, Barbara Korte, Ralf Schneider, and Christopher Harvie (London, 2002), 133–157; Jill Steward, "Tourism in Late Imperial Austria: The Development of Tourist Cultures and Their Associated Images of Place," in *Being Elsewhere: Tourism, Consumer Culture and Identity in Modern Europe and North America*, ed. Shelley Baranowski and Ellen Furlough (Ann Arbor, MI, 2001), 108–134.

9. Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 6, 49.

10. Shelley Baranowski, *Strength through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 2004), esp. chap. 4; see also Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge, 1981); Kristin Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany: Tourism in the Third Reich* (Houndmills, UK, 2005); Aldis Purs, "'One Breath for Every Two Strides': The State's Attempt to Construct Tourism and Identity in Interwar Latvia," in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Ithaca, NY, 2006), 97–115.

ing ancient art and architecture, regain one's equilibrium in preparation for the return to work, kindle one's historical consciousness, and broaden one's horizons by leaving one's village or region to visit exotic locales."<sup>11</sup>

In the Soviet Union, *tourism* was initially considered suspect precisely because of its association with play and pleasure. Therefore, early Soviet tourism activists insisted that the only proper form of socialist touring should be rugged, physical, and ascetic. Bourgeois touring—the package tour and the hotel with its frivolous comfort—was rejected like so many other bourgeois practices and labeled typically “petit bourgeois,” *meshchanskii*. Hotels were a symbol of this bourgeois practice, and they went unbuilt. Like Western aristocrats and Henry James, then, early Soviet tourism advocates rejected normal tourism as vulgar, vulgar, vulgar.<sup>12</sup> Their authentic and socialist tourism would be centered in the tourist base, consisting of economical sleeping tents with central buildings for meals and cultural activities. The Soviet tourist base well into the 1960s much more resembled a scout camp than Club Med, let alone a Hilton hotel or an English bed and breakfast.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that such purposeful socialist leisure excluded pleasure or that pleasure was an alien emotion in the USSR. As David Crowley and Susan Reid have argued, “Pleasure was integral to the utopian promise of communism, based as it was on notions of future abundance and fulfillment.”<sup>13</sup> In other words, consumption and pleasure constituted twin promises of the Soviet dream. The socialist difference meant that pleasure would be not only attainable by the elite but accessible to all citizens as one of the entitlements of the new society. The “right to rest,” to a vacation, was explicitly enshrined in the 1936 Soviet constitution. Vacations away from home offered not only a means to restore one's physical well-being but also an opportunity to expand one's store of knowledge and experience and the chance to inscribe oneself in the nation. Vacation travel also created emotions of anticipation and excitement; the memories of the vacation provided retrospective pleasure for an entire year, as the fitter Antonov enthused. Breathtaking vistas, modern cityscapes, abundant food, sea bathing in warmth and sunlight, exhilarating drives through mountain passes or motorboat rides along the shore, nightly dances and cinema, and even the chance for sexual adventure offered a resoundingly sharp break from the everyday, and holiday experiences produced an outpouring of joyous and grateful emotions in the comments left by Soviet vacationers and tourists.

This history of vacations and tourism addresses the paradox of socialist consumption in a society dedicated to industrial achievement by showing

11. Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*, 143.

12. James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918* (New York, 1988); Urbain, *L'Idiot du Voyage*.

13. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, “Introduction: Pleasures in Socialism?,” in *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc*, ed. David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (Evanston, IL, 2010), 3.

that consumption had always been a central element of the Soviet dream. It explores the paradoxical combination of pleasure and purpose in Soviet vacation practices. But the paradox that lies at the heart of this book is the way in which tourism and vacation policies and practices explicitly encouraged the celebration of individual autonomy in a state founded on collectivist principles. The book provides insight into the development of the “new socialist person,” Homo Sovieticus, normally understood to be an educated, enterprising, collaborative, and collectivist self: indeed, the primary goal of Soviet tourism was to create that Soviet self. These experiences helped to forge a loyal citizenry that acknowledged and valued the regime that facilitated the quest for new experiences and personal development.

Histories of tourism in the West emphasize its importance in the formation of an independent and confident middle class.<sup>14</sup> Tourism created citizens—“aesthetic cosmopolitans” in John Urry’s words—who believed they had a right to travel anywhere, who approached travel with curiosity and openness, and who cultivated an ability to locate their own society in terms of broad historical and geographic knowledge.<sup>15</sup> These middle-class travelers distinguished themselves from their aristocratic predecessors on the Grand Tour by emphasizing effort and purpose. Rudy Koshar reminds us that the word “travel” is derived from “travail,” meaning suffering or labor. “Tourism finds its meaning through effort, contact, and interaction.”<sup>16</sup> For Koshar and the sociologist Orvar Löfgren, tourism is above all an “individuating practice” in which displacement and the experience of being elsewhere constitute new and often expansive selves. Löfgren writes of vacations away from home: “I view vacationing as a cultural laboratory where people have been able to experiment with new aspects of their identities, their social relations, or their interaction with nature and also to use the important cultural skills of daydreaming and mindtraveling. . . . Vacations remain one of the few manageable utopias in our lives.”<sup>17</sup>

Soviet tourism differed from the middle-class norms explored by Löfgren in that it emphasized group travel and the role of the collective. This was true even for spa vacations, which brought strangers together from all corners of the Soviet Union (trumpeted the propaganda) to get to know one another and share in the collective purpose of cultured recuperation. Tourist travel was always taken in groups, whether small, self-chosen collectives of rugged

14. Douglas Peter Mackaman, *Leisure Settings: Bourgeois Culture, Medicine, and the Spa in Modern France* (Chicago, 1998); Rudy Koshar, *German Travel Cultures* (Oxford, 2000); Aron, *Working at Play*; Baranowski and Furlough, *Being Elsewhere*; Jan Palmowski, “Travels with Baedeker: The Guidebook and the Middle Classes in Victorian and Edwardian England,” and Patrick Young, “La Vieille France as Object of Bourgeois Desire: The Touring Club de France and the French Regions, 1890–1918,” both in *Histories of Leisure*, ed. Rudy Koshar, 105–130, 169–189 (Oxford, 2002).

15. John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London, 1995), 167.

16. Koshar, *German Travel Cultures*, 8.

17. *Ibid.*, 204; Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley, 1999), 7.



tourists or the groups of twenty-five, one hundred, or two hundred that comprised the standard package tour. This was partly a logistical choice: tourist officials found planning for units of twenty-five much easier than managing the choices and preferences of individuals. Group tourism facilitated surveillance, especially on trips abroad. Group travel was also an ideological choice, teaching tourists and vacationers not only how to pitch a tent or start a campfire but how to bond as a collective and learn to work harmoniously with new acquaintances under challenging conditions. This emphasis on collectivism might suggest that tourism and leisure travel should be seen primarily as a technology of domination. Indeed, the editors of a collection of essays on pleasure in Nazi Germany argue that amusements and popular pleasures can serve the state's interest in creating a stable and loyal racial community.<sup>18</sup>

Yet paradoxically, learning to function as part of the collective also developed qualities of self-awareness and self-reliance, and the task of creating the Soviet *self* assumed a key role in defining vacation norms and values.<sup>19</sup> Soviet tourism exemplified “Lefort’s paradox,” as defined by Alexei Yurchak: “The Soviet citizen was called upon to submit completely to party leadership, to cultivate a collectivist ethic, and repress individualism, while at the same time becoming an enlightened and independent-minded individual who pursues knowledge and is inquisitive and creative.”<sup>20</sup> By following the strict discipline of the party’s rules for proper tourism (as codified, for example, in the requirements for earning the “Tourist of the USSR” badge) or vacation behavior (as prescribed by the normative health spa regime), the Soviet tourist could achieve authentic self-realization. This book reveals the tension between leisure travel as a state tool for creating loyal subjects and individuals’ appropriation of that tool to cultivate their own autonomous well-being.

The history of Soviet vacations and tourism belongs squarely in the broader modern touring experience, involving consumption, nation building, and individual self-fulfillment. As the theorist Dean MacCannell has argued, “‘the tourist’ is one of the best models available for modern-man-in-general.”<sup>21</sup> Yet “Soviet modern”—the quest for a socialist, communitarian path to modernity—also possesses its own distinctive characteristics and emphases.

18. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d’Almeida, “Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany: An Introduction,” in *Pleasure and Power in Nazi Germany*, ed. Pamela E. Swett, Corey Ross, and Fabrice d’Almeida (New York, 2011), 1–9.

19. On the nature of Soviet collectivity, see Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley, 1999).

20. Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ, 2006), 11. Yurchak elaborates here on the work of the French philosopher Claude Lefort, who investigates a general paradox within the ideology of modernity: the split between the theoretical ideals of the Enlightenment and the practical concerns of the modern state’s political authority and the need to impose an “objective truth” that appears to be external to power (10–11). See Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, MA, 1986).

21. Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, 1999), 1.

The Soviet preoccupation with the meaning of tourist travel originated with the creation in 1927 of the Society for Proletarian Tourism, which aspired to promote tourism among the masses of proletarian workers but also to codify a particular, socialist form of self-conscious leisure travel. Proletarian tourism was intended to be a mass movement, accessible to all and beneficial to all. As tangible fruits of the victory of the proletariat over the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, rest homes and health spas opened their doors first of all to these same proletarians, the new ruling class. In their distinctive features—medicalization, official priority for industrial workers, emphasis on the group, and the purposefulness of both rest and tourism—Soviet tourism and vacations represented attempts to create a unique and superior socialist form of leisure travel.

Looking at the history of tourism from its beginning in 1927 until the 1980s, we can observe how the consumption of leisure travel helped to produce and reinforce new social distinctions and even stratification in Soviet society. But—and here is another paradox—by the 1960s, the industrial worker as the ideal object of policy had given way to the middle-class consumer. If Soviet tourism and vacations became a “mass” phenomenon, the new masses by 1960 turned out to be the Soviet middle class, whose name was “*intelligentsia*.” Access to leisure travel, whether tourism or health resorts, came most readily to and was most energetically sought by those with cultural capital, the educated middle class whose ranks began to swell most significantly in the second half of the twentieth century and especially after 1960. The term “*bourgeoisie*” retained its stigma of class-war opprobrium, but the late Soviet vacationer and tourist was bourgeois in the descriptive sense of the term, distinguished by an urban culture of prosperity without excess, modestly consumerist, cultured and knowledge-seeking, and expecting comfort, service, and small pleasures as entitlements. This middle-class reality would coexist with the ideals of the aristocratic spa vacation well into the 1960s, when tourism and vacation planners slowly began to abandon their grand pleasure palaces in favor of the more utilitarian and mass-produced hotels.

The institutional structures of Soviet tourism and vacations also set them apart from Western models and tsarist predecessors. From their inception, Soviet vacations, including tourism, were considered services provided by the Commissariat of Public Health or by the voluntary Society for Proletarian Tourism. Tourism in the Soviet Union, unlike that in most other countries, was not a branch of the economy but a social movement. Later, the Central Trade Union Council would assume authority over both tourism and health spa vacations, part of its broad mandate to promote the people’s welfare. Throughout the Soviet period, the ability of the state to provide leisure travel lagged behind the demand of individuals for vacations away from home, and over time, increasingly loud voices emerged to suggest that this welfare function would be better organized on a commercial, or economic, basis. Until the very end of the socialist regime, despite growing calls to create a “tourism industry,” Soviet vacations remained organized, financed, and distributed



through the agencies of the trade unions, outside the formal parameters of the state and market alike.

This book traces the development of Soviet vacations and tourism beginning in the 1920s, with the development of the health spa network and the origins of the Society for Proletarian Tourism. Chapter 1 examines the initial premises of the Soviet spa vacation, which emphasized medical recuperation in support of production. Over the span of the 1930s, however, the purpose of these medical vacations began to yield to a more pleasurable experience. Chapters 2 and 3 explore the beginnings of Soviet tourism in the 1920s and 1930s, from voluntary movement to trade union service. Chapter 2 pays close attention to the ideological function of tourism, the efforts to assign meaning to proletarian leisure travel, and its institutional history, demonstrating a politics of institutional rivalries throughout the years of Stalin's rule. Chapter 3 looks more closely at the practice of Soviet tourism, at the journeys themselves and the travelers who made them. By the end of the 1930s, I argue, a modern leisure enterprise had begun to emerge, one most avidly utilized by the new Soviet elite and rising middle class and one that subordinated medical purpose to personal pleasure. As other studies have noted, ideas of the "good life" began in the 1930s.<sup>22</sup> In this respect, the Great Patriotic War that began in 1941 interrupted this development but did not alter it. Chapter 4 takes up the story of vacations and tourism in the postwar years. The greatest challenge for tourism and vacations in building on the patterns established before the war was to recover from the economic devastation of wartime, and little energy or effort was expended on reimagining the structure, content, or meaning of these vacations.

The final three chapters examine vacations and tourism from the mid-1950s until the advent of perestroika. They trace a growing convergence between the conceptually separate spa vacation and active tourism. Chapter 5 explores the evolution of the health resort vacation from medical treatment to an object of consumer desire. Despite the growth of tourism and the expansion of tourist itineraries, the spa vacation remained the gold standard in socialist vacationing for many Soviet citizens and particularly for workers in production.

Chapter 6 focuses on the expansion of Soviet tourism, which took off particularly dramatically in the 1960s, and it follows Soviet tourists in their first exposure to travel abroad. Beginning in 1955, tour groups began to visit fraternal socialist countries and in some cases capitalist countries. While domestic tourist and vacation travel would far outweigh foreign travel, I argue that the exposure of Soviet tourists to foreign vacation practices decisively if gradually changed the culture of Soviet vacations. What Soviet tourists encountered in Eastern Europe was the successor to a well-developed prewar

22. Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne*; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1999); Crowley and Reid, *Pleasures in Socialism*.

bourgeois tourist industry, in which hotels and their associated services, restaurants, and trained city guides constituted a routine part of the tourist experience. Soviet tourists and tourism officials began to adopt these bourgeois practices in their own tourism philosophy, responding more positively to consumer demand for variety, comfort, service, and family vacations.<sup>23</sup>

Chapter 7 looks at the evolution of Soviet tourism into an industry in its own right, a response to models from abroad and to growing standards of living at home. Still a work in progress at the beginning of the 1980s, this transformation meant building hotels instead of sanatoria and following the desires of consumers rather than trying to mold them. It notes a growing convergence between sedentary and tourist vacations and a growing divergence between the official state values assigned to tourism and those ascribed by tourists and vacationers themselves.

My story ends in the mid-1980s. The reforms launched in 1986 under the rubric of *perestroika* led to a transformation of the economic structures of Soviet leisure travel, beginning with the legalization of cooperative ventures to provide many consumer services. Reform led next to the establishment of joint capitalist-socialist ventures in the tourism, transportation, and other industries that further changed the familiar basis of Soviet leisure travel. The failure of these efforts at reform contributed to a plummeting standard of living and a withdrawal of state subsidies for vacations. *Perestroika*, so hopefully launched by economists like Abel Aganbegian, had closed off the possibilities to engage in the kind of leisure mobility that he had celebrated in 1966. By the end of the Soviet regime, leisure travel had become financially almost impossible for most Soviet citizens, even while the state at long last freely permitted travel abroad. This new paradox awaits its own historian.

23. In my treatment of post-Stalin tourism, I owe a great debt to Anne E. Gorsuch, whose *All This Is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford, 2011), analyzes the postwar Soviet effort to encounter and comprehend the West. Beginning with domestic travel in the late Stalin years, then tourism to a “Europe-like” republic, Estonia, and continuing on to Eastern and Western Europe, Gorsuch uses tourism as a lens to explore the meaning of the Khrushchev period in opening the USSR to the world, and she analyzes the reactions of Soviet citizens to these encounters with the Western Other. Gorsuch focuses on tourism only, whereas my ambit here is broader: leisure travel that includes sedentary vacations as well as active tourism. What became a cherished moment for Homo Sovieticus was as much the annual vacation by the sea as that on the road.

## chapter one

# Mending the Human Motor

Materialist and Marxist, the Soviet Union subscribed to the labor theory of value, privileging work as the foundation of personal worth and as the path toward a society of abundance for all. Work—physical or mental—was the obligation of all citizens. Work ennobled; it was mankind’s highest calling. But work took its toll on the human organism, and along with creating the necessary conditions for productive labor, a socialist system would also include productive rest as an integral element of its economy. The eight-hour workday, a weekly day off from work, and an annual vacation constituted the trinity of restorative and healthful rest in the emerging Soviet system.

Of these three, the annual vacation was the most original contribution of Soviet socialism to promoting the welfare of its workforce. Its labor code of 1922, the first in the world to do so, stipulated that all workers with at least five and a half months of work tenure were entitled to an annual two-week vacation. And as early as 1919, Soviet leaders had begun to create a network of vacation institutions that would maximize the benefit of workers’ annual breaks from production and labor.<sup>1</sup> Rest homes and health resorts would become “workshops for the repair of toilers,” offering structured rest and medical therapies that would allow workers to recover their strength and energy for the work year to come. French workers, wrote the health commissar Nikolai Semashko, had only one rest home, the cemetery.<sup>2</sup> Soviet workers, by contrast, enjoyed an absolute right to rest, one that would later be enshrined in the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union.

This chapter explores the practice of Soviet vacationing in rest homes and health spas (*kurorty*, or cure places) in the 1920s and the 1930s and the evolution of specific doctrines of socialist rest. The question of whether vacation was a recuperative necessity or a socialist entitlement shaped planners’

1. A decree of April 1919 nationalized all existing spas and other institutions of healing. L.G. Gol'dfayl' and I.D. Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii, i doma otdykha SSSR* (Moscow, 1928), 10.

2. N.A. Semashko, “Trud i otdykh,” in *Doma otdykha. Sbornik statei i materialov (1920–1923 gg.)* (Moscow, 1923) (hereinafter *Doma otdykha 1920–1923*), 8.

debates about building vacation institutions and allocating access to them. Alongside these debates, the beneficiaries of the annual socialist vacation asserted their own preferences for fun and merrymaking as well as medicine and therapy. By the late 1930s, a Soviet resort vacation had emerged that featured pleasure as much as medical purpose and attracted more of the Soviet elite than deserving factory toilers in need of bodily repair.

## Socialist Rest

Early discussions of production, leisure, consumption, and health in the Soviet Union emphasized the utilitarian element of leisure in the socialist system. New forms of recuperation could provide an antidote to the intensity of socialist forms of production such as shock work (individuals seeking to surpass set norms) and socialist competition (work groups challenging other work units to compete in fulfilling and overfulfilling the plan). The scientific organization of labor required a scientific organization of rest.<sup>3</sup> Proletarian leisure had nothing in common with “cinema, skittles, beer, or dancing,” argued officials.<sup>4</sup> Rather, it belonged to the serious realms of production and public health. In this context, medicalization emerged as an integral characteristic of Soviet annual leisure. All rational leisure pursuits began with a visit to the doctor, and leisure activists encouraged participants to monitor their own medical conditions to ensure that they were fulfilling their responsibilities to rational recuperation.<sup>5</sup> Like a machine, a person needed repair and recuperation: socialist leisure restored the proletarian machine-body.<sup>6</sup>

The English word “vacation” derives from the Latin stem *vacare*, to be empty, free. In the context of twentieth-century leisure, vacation is the absence of work. Similarly, the British term “holiday” conveys something sacred and exceptional. The Russian terms for vacation convey a different meaning. The annual leave, *otpusk*, connotes release, being set free. But the proper purpose of *otpusk*, for a Soviet worker, was *otdykh*, from the verb *otdyshat'sia*, or to recover one's breath. While the term is conventionally

3. G. M. Danishevskii, “Problema massovogo rabocheho ot dykha vo vtoroi piatiletke,” in *Zdravookhranenie i rabochii ot dykh vo vtoroi piatiletke. Trudy I vsesoiuznoi konferentsii po planirovaniu zdravookhraneniia i rabocheho ot dykha*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1933), 68; G. Bergman, *Otdykh letom* (Moscow, 1927), 7.

4. Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 15, 18.

5. See, for example, instructions on getting a medical certificate (*spravka*) in O. A. Arkhangel'skaia, *Rabota iacheiki OPTE po samodeiatel'nomu turizmu. (Instruktivno-metodicheskie ukazaniia dlia iacheek OPTE)* (Moscow, 1935), 20; *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, comp. O. Arkhangel'skaia and N. Turiutina (Moscow, 1938), 202–205; S. L. Lifshits, “Mediko-sanitarnoe obsluzhivanie Domov Otdykha,” in *Doma ot dykha 1920–1923*, 27–45; L. Ia. Beloborodov, “Printsipy i poriadok otbora v D. Otdykha,” in *Doma ot dykha 1920–1923*, 46–51.

6. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132 (May 1932 conference on worker vacations), l. 152. On this machine imagery in literature, see Rolf Hellebust, *Flesh to Metal: Soviet Literature and the Alchemy of Revolution* (Ithaca, NY, 2003).

rendered in English as “rest,” its meaning for Soviet culture is a much more active one. Under socialism, wrote one authority on socialist leisure, we challenge the conception that *otdykh* means “peace [*pokoi*], inactivity, idleness . . . A system of correctly organized rest ought to activate the worker or collective farmer, strengthen their will to labor and properly combine amusements, games, and fascinating activities with expanding their political, productive, technical, and general cultural horizons.”<sup>7</sup> The annual leave was an empty vessel to be filled with socially, culturally, and economically meaningful activity: *otdykh*. Another term that often replaced *otdykh* in practical discussions—*ozdorovlenie*, or making healthy—reinforced the physiological value of vacation.<sup>8</sup> In the Soviet Union, the annual vacation was purposeful, a joint investment by the state and the individual to restore socially useful labor power and to improve the self.

A few experts believed that the need for vacations would wither away in a socialist state. “Normal” socialist labor would not overtire a worker, and life itself would provide sufficiently varied experiences and impressions. “The need for an annual vacation will disappear,” said one social insurance expert. Others argued that since work was a matter of “honor, courage, and valor,” the idea of a vacation devalued the very notion of socialist labor. It was a Menshevik point of view, argued health experts in 1932, to say that labor itself was “harmful.”<sup>9</sup>

Most Soviet experts embraced the ideal of a socialist system of rest that would employ the discipline of science to determine the optimal organization of vacation time. In this regard, the Soviet Union situated itself squarely in a European Enlightenment tradition that had already fostered a scientific approach to issues of health and the human organism. Nineteenth-century French spa culture had begun to apply science and reason to its therapeutic regimen as early as the 1830s, including a strict use of time marked by the same bells that had begun to rule the capitalist factory. The Russian elite, like Leo Tolstoy’s Alexei Karenin, had a long tradition of seeking their cures in establishments in France, Germany, and Switzerland, and they were well familiar with these practices: “As in previous years, with the coming of spring he went to a spa abroad to restore his health, upset each year by his strenuous winter labours. Returning in July, as usual, he at once sat down with

7. Danishevskii, “Problema massovogo rabochego otdykh,” 69.

8. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, l. 110. *Ozdorovlenie*, literally “healthification,” was a fundamental principle of Soviet public health, but as Daniel Beer argues, it originated as a response to a crisis of “degeneration” in the late imperial period. He translates the term as “renovation.” Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity, 1880–1930* (Ithaca, NY, 2008). See also John F. Hutchinson, *Politics and Public Health in Revolutionary Russia, 1890–1918* (Baltimore, 1990).

9. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 11, 81–82, 93–95, 151; the insurance expert attributed this point of view, with which he disagreed, to economic planners in Gosplan, who believed the “rest home should be liquidated as a class” (l. 95).

increased energy to his customary work.”<sup>10</sup> By the end of the imperial regime, the rise of professions and a growing demand by a middle class for the consumption of good health had produced an explosion of medical remedies, including health spas, that would bring the benefits of modern science to the everyday consumer.<sup>11</sup> Soviet medicine built on these traditions, but it added three particularly socialist principles: centralized unity of health care providers, free medical care, and an emphasis on prevention, hygiene, and public health.<sup>12</sup>

Soviet public health officials who gathered to consider “worker leisure” in 1933 fluently spoke this language of modern science, and medicine constituted the central axis of Soviet vacation practices.<sup>13</sup> Climate therapy (sun, sea, and fresh air), physical culture therapy (morning exercises, volleyball, and bracing hikes), and nutritional therapy guaranteed that all Soviet vacationers would spend their annual leaves in scientifically planned and purposeful activities. One’s own physical constitution, as certified by a medical specialist, would determine the best form of rest: whether a six-week recuperation in a tuberculosis sanatorium, a month-long stay at a “climate” rest home, or a long-distance backpacking trip for the physically healthy but emotionally drained urban dweller. Doctors signed the certificates that entitled vacationers to receive a pass to a resort or rest home; they checked the patients in when they arrived, and they sent them home again with a detailed bill of health. The line between treatment and ordinary rest was blurred: indeed, the terms for “patients” (*bol’nye*—from the word for illness) and “resters” (*otdykhaiushchie*) were generally interchangeable. In the early years of the Soviet regime, scarce places in health resorts and rest homes were meant to be used by the most medically needy—particularly those suffering from tuberculosis but also those afflicted with neurasthenia. Very soon, however, such restrictions were swamped by the broader social need to provide all working people with the opportunity to recover their strength. Newly nationalized health resorts proved too attractive to be reserved only for the very ill. Vacations at one of the “health places” (*zdravnitsy*) came to be considered attractive incentives for exemplary work performance. In time, medical rationing of scarce vacation places became supplemented by rationing based on social status, as we shall see.

10. Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York, 2000), 200.

11. Mackaman, *Leisure Settings*, 96–98; Susan K. Morrissey, “The Economy of Nerves: Health, Commercial Culture, and the Self in Late Imperial Russia,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 3 (2010): 645–675. See also Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia* (Ithaca, NY, 1993); and Beer, *Renovating Russia*.

12. Neil B. Weissman, “Origins of Soviet Health Administration: Narkomzdrav 1918–1928,” in *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia*, ed. Susan Gross Solomon and John F. Hutchinson (Bloomington, IN, 1990), 97; see also Susan Gross Solomon, “Social Hygiene and Soviet Public Health, 1921–1930,” in Solomon and Hutchinson, *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia*, 175–199.

13. Danishevskii, “Problema massovogo rabochego otdykha,” 77.

### Sites of Leisure and Restoration: Kurort and Rest Home

Serious socialist vacationing in the Soviet Union built on the nineteenth- and twentieth-century culture of science, and it depended on expert professionals for its implementation. Soviet vacations also relied upon a built environment inherited by the revolution. Before the regime began to construct its own health facilities, it first utilized the nationalized properties of the aristocracy and merchant princes, including the sanatoria and *pansions* of the prerevolutionary health spas and villas and country estates that would be converted into rest homes.

Russia's spa culture had first emerged in the service of empire. Mineral spring towns in the Caucasus welcomed recuperating military officers in the early nineteenth century, followed by royal family members who established estates in the area, who in turn attracted a growing population of middle-class consumers of vacations and leisure. Crimea began to host imperial visitors in the second half of the nineteenth century, and by the end of the century a bustling resort culture had developed not only in imperial Yalta but along the Black Sea coast and in the North Caucasus. Medical and commercial interests worked together to attract visitors in search of therapeutic leisure, part of a larger commerce in health remedies that would counter the mounting stresses of urban life.<sup>14</sup> The history of the spas of the Black Sea shore in Abkhazii illustrates this pattern of commercial development. Medical professionals had determined at an international congress in 1898 that the Abkhazian coastal town of Sukhum (population three thousand) possessed ideal climate conditions for the treatment of lung diseases, particularly tuberculosis. Naturalists had already discovered the remarkable botanical variety of the region, and in 1895 a factory owner-philanthropist, Smetskoi, purchased land on which to develop a botanical garden. Shortly after the turn of the century, he added several sanatorium buildings for the treatment of patients on his property, modeling them after the German spas he knew. Growing demand by family members accompanying the patients and by completely healthy individuals led to the further construction of hotels and *pansions* to accommodate the visitors, served by the farm and vineyards that Smetskoi had also established on his property. Further up the coast, in the small town of Sochi, the Moscow businessman Tarnopol'skii built an expansive spa, soon to be incorporated as the Caucasian Riviera.<sup>15</sup>

The Black Sea coast remained less popular before the revolution than the four towns clustered in the North Caucasus mineral springs area:

14. Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), 171–177; *Kurorty SSSR: Spravochnik*, ed. M. I. Ganshtak (Moscow, 1936), 6–8; Morrissey, “Economy of Nerves.”

15. *Kurorty Abkhazii. Putevoditel' s prilozheniem kratkogo ocherka osenne-zimnikh kurortov SSSR (Sukhum-Gagry)*, ed. L. B. Korets (Moscow, 1925), 59–62; *Sochi* (Moscow, 1959), 9.



Essentuki, Piatigorsk, Kislovodsk, and Zheleznovodsk. It was here that Russian military officers, including the poet Mikhail Lermontov, had sought respite and cures in the nineteenth century. The opening of a railway link from Rostov to the Mineral Waters station in 1875 assured a permanent flow of patients and vacationers. In addition to bath works, sipping stations, and medical facilities, the towns' commercial developers constructed parks, theaters, and music halls, drawing patrons from Russia's aristocratic, moneyed, and professional strata.<sup>16</sup> Yet by and large, Russians preferred to take their cures abroad. In 1912, German spas counted more than a million visitors; Russian spas attracted only 110,000 cure seekers. The most visited Russian spa, Essentuki, attracted only 13,000 visitors in 1912, while Bohemia's Karlsbad drew 70,000, including 20,000 Russians. Local publicity emphasized that the features of Russian spas compared well with European watering places, but they lacked the cachet of the more famous destinations in the West.<sup>17</sup>

The world war that began in 1914 cut Russians off from European cures. Medical specialists left the spas for duty in the Russian armed forces, and many resort properties were turned over to the Red Cross and other public organizations for use as hospitals for wounded soldiers.<sup>18</sup> The health spas of the south fell upon hard times after the revolution, as Crimea and other curative playgrounds served as staging grounds and bases of operations for civil war armies and foreign interventionists. By 1918, the fledgling Soviet government possessed only three working spas, all located in central provinces of the Russian Federation.<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, the spa industry collapsed as customers and proprietors fled for safe havens abroad. With the end of the civil war in late 1920, the Soviet government turned its official attention to economic and demographic reconstruction. Properly rebuilt, the former aristocratic pleasure zones would now serve as centers of recuperation for civil war veterans, government officials, and in theory, the new beneficiaries of soviet power, workers and peasants.

In December 1920 (a time of growing turmoil and opposition even within Bolshevik ranks), the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree declaring that Crimean properties "formerly owned by big landowners and capitalists, and palaces of the former tsar and grand princes ought to be used

16. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 54–58. In 1907, a typical year, over 40 percent of visitors to Mineral Waters consisted of large landholders and merchants; middling property owners counted for 24 percent, and officers, officials, and professionals like teachers and doctors each constituted about 10 percent of spa patients. *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 8.

17. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 10.

18. *Ibid.*, 58.

19. These were Staraia Russa, in Novgorod province (founded in 1828); Lipetsk, in the Don River province of the same name (founded in 1803); and Sergeevskii Mineral Springs in the Urals steppe (founded 1833). *Kurorty SSSR. Spravochnik* (Moscow, 1923), 9; *Kurorty. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (Moscow, 1983), 326, 221, 306.



as sanatoria and health institutions for workers and peasants.” The Commissariat of Public Health received orders to prepare twenty-five thousand beds for the treatment of the victors of the revolution.<sup>20</sup> Economic recovery lagged behind the issuance of decrees, but gradually and haphazardly, a new socialist health spa network began to take shape in the key areas of Crimea and the Caucasian Mineral Waters. Officially, industrial workers received the highest priority in assignments to health resorts, but senior party and state officials regularly sought rest and treatment on southern shores, adding their communist imprimatur to the model begun by the imperial family and its troops. In July 1923, the Kremlin ordered the Karl Marx resort to be made habitable in Suuk-Su, Crimea, within two weeks, just in time for the arrival of weary Central Executive Committee members. (The crash effort was successful: Rozalia Zemliachka wrote in the resort’s comment book that she had enjoyed the food and the living conditions.) In December 1923, Leon Trotsky was sent by his physicians for a two-month climate therapy cure in Sukhumi, which famously kept him away from Moscow at the moment of Lenin’s death and disadvantaged him in the intense struggle over Lenin’s successor.<sup>21</sup>

The enormity of the destruction wrought by years of war and by revolutionary upheavals slowed the availability of funds for the reconstruction of the newly socialized health spas. Local jurisdictions frequently took matters into their own hands, appropriating private hospitals and spas for public use. The Russian Federation’s Commissariat of Public Health took over the lion’s share of health facilities, but it could not finance them all adequately. Eventually a hierarchical system developed that would remain the model for the duration of Soviet rule. The best facilities became designated as national (*obshchegosudarstvennye*) spas, and while they were expected to finance the bulk of their operations with revenue from patients or state insurance payments, they also received national subsidies for scientific work and new construction. Regional and local spas had to operate under the budgets of their local governments.<sup>22</sup> In addition, individual agencies, such as the Central Trade Union Council, the Communist Party, the Red Army, and various government and economic bodies financed and managed an increasing number of health resorts. Such proprietary institutions could bypass state rules for funding and for the allocation of patients, and by the 1930s they were regarded as the cream of the Soviet vacation system. Proprietary sanatoria paid their staff higher wages than the rest, and they commandeered the best beaches.<sup>23</sup>

20. Decree of 21 December 1920, quoted from Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 202.

21. GARF, f. 3263 (kurort reports, 1923–24), op. 1, d. 5, ll. 1–1ob.; d. 9, l. 2; Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York, 1970), 508–509.

22. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 11.

23. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8 (report on Caucasus Mineral Waters resorts), ll. 50–51, 117–118, 190.

**Table 1.1** Beds and resident patients in Soviet sanatoria, 1920–1927

Year	Number of beds	Number of resident patients	Number of outpatients	Total patients
1918	—	8,200		
1919	—	4,992		
1920	—	38,883	6,569	45,402
1921	29,096	57,687	17,838	75,525
1922	13,721	32,731	9,002	41,733
1923	22,714	56,252	37,762	94,104
1924	23,045	72,446	59,374	131,820
1925	26,460	91,338	70,481	161,819
1926	28,809	93,341	79,832	173,173
1927	23,370	93,600	96,019	189,619

Source: Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 14.

This pattern too would persist: the central command economy was riddled with independent institutional entrepreneurs.

Real expansion of imperial-era health resorts and the development of new centers took off only in the mid-1930s, beginning with the second five-year plan in 1933. During the 1920s, the health commissariat placed highest priority on restoring resort areas' infrastructure and reviving the capacities of existing sanatoria to receive patients. The number of available beds at Soviet sanatoria remained constant in the mid-1920s, although the number of patients served began to rise in the second half of the 1920s, as table 1.1 demonstrates, suggesting a more intensive utilization of available places. The increase in the number of so-called ambulatory patients, accounting for half of all health spa patients by 1927, indicates the resurgent desirability of the spa as a vacation destination. Rather than receiving full room and board in a particular sanatorium, these outpatients rented rooms in hotels, pensions, or private homes and received medical treatments (including sun bathing and swimming) either as day patients of sanatoria or through central polyclinics. The first five-year plan (1928–1932) saw modest growth in the sanatorium network, which reported a 66,400-bed capacity by 1932. During the second five-year plan (1933–1937), capacity nearly doubled, reaching 113,000 beds by 1937.<sup>24</sup>

By the late 1930s, major new investments had resulted in the construction of lavish new facilities that became showplaces of the Soviet health

24. M. Ia. Rusakov, "Voprosy tret'ego piatiletnogo plana. K voprosu o rekonstruktsii kurortov SSSR v tret'em piatiletke," *Voprosy kurortologii*, no. 4 (1937): 84; GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24 (kurort managers' conference, March 1938), l. 44.



Rest home of the USSR Soviet Central Executive Committee, 1935, Sukhumi. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 2102339. Used with permission of the archive.

care system. Despite its democratic foundations, the Soviet spa system drew aesthetic inspiration from prerevolutionary aristocratic models. Soviet spas would be constructed in grand style, they would require an extensive service network as befitting the old aristocracy, and they would also inculcate in the patients, or resters, an appreciation for high culture and refinement. Whether in palaces for young pioneers or in facilities for summer holidays, the leisure world built for the Soviet proletariat was luxuriantly aristocratic, offering a world of rest, medical attention, and ease. At the same time but with less publicity, health planners constructed local and more modest health spas that would be accessible to blue-collar workers and white-collar employees in new construction zones around the USSR.<sup>25</sup>

Alongside the kurort system, the Soviet regime introduced a parallel institution, the rest home (*dom otdykha*), designed to provide medically restorative vacations closer to population centers. While generally administered by the Commissariat of Public Health, rest homes took on a variety of forms and complexions. The first homes originated in Petrograd in spring 1920,

25. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 178–82.

operated by the city's labor department; Moscow followed suit four months later, but here the city's public health department organized and supervised the homes. Many of the original homes were established in confiscated gentry estates and bourgeois dachas, located in prime forest or garden spots near cities. Others occupied newly constructed two-story log homes, some with outdoor covered dining pavilions. Here workers would receive nourishing food and medical advice, engage in moderately active cultural pastimes, and develop lifelong habits for healthy living. Medical doctors administered the homes, assisted by cultural and sports instructors. As symbols of the first fruits of the revolution, many individual trade unions, trade union councils, and even individual enterprises "feverishly" established their own rest homes in the early 1920s.<sup>26</sup>

This expansion raised the question of control and jurisdiction: was the rest home an extension of the workplace (which provided most of the financing for these homes) or part of the state's public health network? Medical specialists feared that the health benefits of vacation homes would dissipate without more direct supervision by the health commissariats. Consequently, Moscow's health department published a detailed compendium of instructions, representing "best medical practices" for the organization of individual rest homes. These included instructions for cleaning, sample registration forms for resters, detailed hourly lists of activities, and menus for the four meals served daily.<sup>27</sup> Although authority for administering rest homes would shift from health departments to trade unions over the next decade, the medical component remained central.

By 1927, some three hundred rest homes had been established throughout the Soviet Union, with spaces for forty-six thousand vacationers. This was roughly half the capacity of the sanatorium network. Moscow and Leningrad accounted for fifty of these homes and 33 percent of the spaces. By law, rest homes would resemble small resorts, with sleeping quarters, dining room, quiet rooms for reading and games, sports fields, swimming pool or river beach, baths, and showers. Resters would pass their days strolling in the woods, sunning on the river, or playing chess or checkers, and in the evenings they would view films or amateur performances by local peasant folk groups.<sup>28</sup>

A 1928 account of a printers' union rest home suggested an alternate reality. Vacationers made the four-kilometer journey from the train station to the home on foot, carrying their suitcases. The library lacked books and newspapers, the food was bad, and many of the resters engaged in the time-honored

26. N. S. Rykova, "Opyt organizatsii Domov Otdykha," *Dom otdykha 1920–1923*, 11–15.

27. *Ibid.*, 18–19; *Doma otdykha. Sbornik statei i materialov 1924–1925 gg. (K ustanovke rezhima v domakh otdykha)*, ed. L. E. Fedynskaia, vyp. 2 (Moscow, 1925) (hereinafter *Doma otdykha 1924–1925*).

28. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 405–448; Danishevskii, "Problema massovogo rabochego otdykha," 73.



Sleeping room at the Mal'binsk rest home of the Irkutsk district insurance fund, 1924. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 421898. Used with permission of the archive.

occupations of philandering and drinking. No wonder they cut their stays short, wrote a worker correspondent. Married women workers made little use of the rest homes for their annual vacations because they had no place to leave their children while they were away.<sup>29</sup>

By the beginning of the 1930s, health officials worried that the rest home system was failing. Almost 15 percent of the available places went unfilled. The requisitioned buildings in which they had been located now urgently required capital repairs, and the country's food crisis undermined the nutritional value of rest home vacations. The unwillingness of factory workers to spend their vacations in these homes led to some proposals to eliminate the system entirely. Others argued, however, that for "healthy but tired" workers, the rest home was often a more appropriate vacation destination than a health spa; they should be expanded and diversified, not cut back. Many experts believed that rest homes that catered to single branches of industry or even individual enterprises were more attractive than general-purpose bases: vacationers with common experiences and cultural requirements would be easier to serve, and their regimens could be specifically targeted to the needs

29. *Pechatnik*, 12 July 1928, 24; also *Pechatnik*, 1 September 1928, 40; GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 88, 239.

of production.<sup>30</sup> A certain number of state homes were consequently turned over to individual enterprises, such as Moscow's Elektrozavod, to whom the Moscow health department awarded a home for fulfilling its five-year plan in two and a half years. Special rest homes were designated for youth, although adults grumbled that young people would be better off in less sedentary institutions. With the introduction of the so-called continual workweek, with four days on the job and one day for rest, a new "fifth-day" rest home to which workers could retreat for rest, nutrition, and culture on their days off made its appearance. Since a portion of the workforce was always off, these fifth-day rest homes could be utilized continually. In fact, however, the continual workweek never really materialized in Soviet industry, and the fifth-day bases soon became utilized fully only on weekends.<sup>31</sup>

Some experts called for a massive shift of resources in the second five-year plan away from the traditional fourteen-day rest home to one-day homes, youth colonies, and parks of culture, but the rest home remained a standard vacation option in the 1930s. The huge Hammer and Sickle plant in Moscow opened its own rest home in 1934 in a former princely residence on the Moscow River. It offered cozy sleeping accommodations (each bed with its own night table), a club, electric lights, library, and sports fields. The aristocratic legacy was not lost on the home's new patrons. Here a shock worker like the fifty-year old Korolov could write to the plant newspaper that he "lived just as well as the old princes. They spent their free time in drinking and idleness, but I live otherwise. I rest in a cultured manner, and my purpose is to rest better so that I can give more back to production for my socialist country." The Elektrozavod plant acquired three rest homes between 1931 and 1933, the last of them designated for one-day and weekend stays. In 1933, 4,700 of its workers received two-week stays in the rest homes (compared with 860 who vacationed in health spas), and another 2,600 visited the one-day rest home. If the quality of food at some homes remained appalling, meals at Elektrozavod's home had so improved by 1934 that workers "fought" for passes to go there. Moscow's Trekhgornaia textile manufacturer opened its rest home in a reconstructed dacha on the Kliaz'ma River in 1936; a work in progress, it required the first resters themselves to help build its sleeping quarters and water supply. Vacationers slept in tents adjacent to the two-story log main building, and they received their meals at outdoor tables, "surrounded by wonderful nature." In the evenings, they watched films, sang, danced, and "made merry."<sup>32</sup>

30. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 21, 12, 14, 35; d. 131, l. 9; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 2 (report from central committee of coal miners' trade union, September 1933), ll. 1–2.

31. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 48, 76, 218, 228; see also Sergei Zhuravlev and Mikhail Mukhin, "*Krepost' sotsializma*": *Povsednevnost' i motivatsiia truda na sovetskom predpriatii, 1928–1938 gg.* (Moscow, 2004), 193; *Pechatnik*, 15 June 1927, 18; GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 131, ll. 15–17.

32. "Lived just as well," *Martenovka*, 6 June 1935; 10 July 1935; Zhuravlev and Mukhin, "*Krepost' sotsializma*," 193–195; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 16 July 1936; 9 August 1936; 4 June 1938; "Surrounded by wonderful nature," 4 July 1938; "made merry," 10 August 1938.



Pleasure and purpose combined even more closely in a new form of rest home that took its place in the roster of health-improving vacations in the 1930s. Floating rest homes, aboard riverboats and barges, offered the same healthful regimen as stationary rest homes but added the therapeutic benefits of changing scenery. River travel calmed the nervous system, improved the appetite, and contributed to healthful sleep, wrote a public health expert. Floating resters could receive attentive service, with ample food, a library, games, sun bathing, and evening entertainments, just as on land. But they could also familiarize themselves with the life of the country and the achievements of socialist construction. In 1938, fifteen floating rest homes plied the Volga and Kama Rivers, with sailings from Gor'kii to Perm, Saratov, and Astrakhan (and back); 13,500 passengers could be accommodated in a season. Such cruises enjoyed a huge demand, an early harbinger of a Soviet vacation that combined touring and rest. "River tourism has become one of the most popular forms of rest," wrote the popular daily *Vecherniaia Moskva* (*Evening Moscow*) in 1937; in Gor'kii these cruises always filled up all their spaces.<sup>33</sup>

## Destinations

The unboundedness of the Soviet Union's vast expanse occupied a special place in the country's emerging ideology.<sup>34</sup> Huge swaths of the country offered suitable conditions for healthful rest in the embrace of nature, with its forests, lakes, rivers, mineral springs, and clean air. Planners argued for the development of kurorts and rest homes in all parts of the country, proximate to wherever industrial and urban construction took place. But investment centered on the three regions where Soviet vacationers most wanted to spend their summer holidays: Crimea and the Caucasian Mineral Waters area, both of which had long histories as Russian spas, and the emerging Caucasus coastline of the Black Sea. By 1936, these three areas accounted for sixty thousand beds, roughly two-thirds of the nation's total capacity.<sup>35</sup>

The Caucasus Mineral Waters, the oldest resort area in Russia, dated its imperial patronage to 1803, but by the twentieth century the Crimean peninsula had emerged as the pearl of Russian and Soviet therapeutic destinations, the "all-union health resort." In the eighteenth century Empress Catherine II had designated Crimea a garden incorporating the vast diversity of her newly expanded empire, and well into the 1930s Crimea boosters continued to laud

33. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 131, l. 53; N.E. Khrisandrov, "Plovuchie doma otdykha i sanatorii," *Voprosy kurortologii*, nos. 1–2 (1938): 82–85; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 19 August 1937; GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 131, l. 53.

34. See, for example, Emma Widdis, *Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War* (New Haven, CT, 2003).

35. GARF, f. 5528, op. 6, d. 108 (materials on social composition of kurort patients, 1930), l. 8; GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 179–182; calculation from *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), and GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24 (1938).

its rich variety of flora and fauna, landscape, scenery, historical civilizations, and ethnic groups. Before the revolution, this Crimean Eden was accessible only to the rich, powerful, and well-born. Now thanks to the revolution, Soviet guidebooks pointed out, the Crimean experience could be enjoyed by any Soviet citizens, whether patients with serious diseases needing long recuperations, resters seeking to recover their strength, or tourists planning hiking trips from one outstanding Crimean attraction to another. “Even the shortest stay in Crimea produces a special kind of elevation of activity, increases strength, and fortifies both the psychological and physical resiliency of the organism,” said one 1924 edition.<sup>36</sup>

Frequently compared to the French and Italian Rivas, Crimea could accommodate patients and visitors year-round, but the best time to visit was in golden autumn. The peninsula qualified as a climate resort, in which treatment consisted of a physical relocation to a natural setting that was rich in clean air, bright sunlight, and fresh water. In particular, Crimea’s southern shore, with its coastline, dramatic promontories, sublime views of the azure Black Sea, wild nature, and mountain backdrop, combined all the best factors for climate therapy. Stretching from Yalta in the western end to Alushta toward the east, the southern shore featured palaces, parks, and nature reserves along with sanatoria, rest homes, hotels, and private dachas that took in paying customers. In addition to climate therapy offered by nature itself, patients could also partake of balneological therapies—healing baths and mineral water treatments. They could also benefit from Crimea’s unique grape therapy. The grape season ran from mid-August until early November; on doctors’ orders, patients could consume up to six to eight pounds of grapes a day: for many diseases, kurort physicians believed grapes were just as effective as mineral water.<sup>37</sup> On the western side of the peninsula, Evpatoria lacked the traditional appeal of the southern shore, but it boasted broad sandy beaches, unlike the rugged shore of the south.

The Soviet health commissariat decreed in 1921 that Crimea would become the country’s premier health resort and set a target of 25,000 beds for its expansion. The financial difficulties of the early Soviet regime made this goal impossible to achieve, and a major earthquake in September 1927 further hampered development: all the patients on the southern shore had to be evacuated, and aftershocks continued into November. The government allocated one million rubles for the reconstruction of this southern shore, and by 1928, according to one source, the capacity of Crimean sanatoria had returned to its previous level of 7,359 beds. As late as 1928, the all-union health resort remained a showplace of the mixed public-private economy of the New Economic Policy. Individual government trusts managed resorts on

36. Andreas Schönle, “Garden of the Empire: Catherine’s Appropriation of the Crimea,” *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (2001): 1–23; *Kurorty Kryma. Spravochnik*, ed. N. I. Teziakov and L. G. Gol’dfail’ (Moscow, 1924), 8–15; *Krym. Putevoditel’* (Simferopol’, n.d. [late 1920s]), 7–31.

37. *Kurorty SSSR* (1923), 15–17; *Kurorty Kryma*, 61–63.



the southern and western shores; other hotels and resorts belonged to various state or economic agencies, and these existed side by side with private enterprises such as the Hotel Dragonigo in Sevastopol' and fifty-five private pensions in Yalta. Sevastopol' and Yalta served as centers of sightseeing and excursions. Patients and vacationers alike could journey from here to visit the Crimean War battlefields at Balaklava or the Crimean khan's palace at Bakhchisarai. During the course of the first five-year plan from 1928 to 1932, all remaining private accommodations were nationalized and attached to existing sanatoria or converted to state-run pensions and rest homes. By 1936, a fully socialist Crimea could advertise the availability of 30,000 beds in 168 health establishments.<sup>38</sup>

The Caucasus Mineral Waters consisted of four spa towns located in sheltered valleys on the north slopes of the Caucasus mountain range. More than sixty mineral springs flowed in the vicinity. Like watering places in Western Europe, life in each of the towns centered around the culture of mineral water, with elaborate bathhouses, drinking stations, and cultivated parks to serve patients and provide them with tranquillity during their cures. Soviet medical officials proudly compared the district to the best European alpine spas of Davos and Montreux. The picturesque town of Piatigorsk (at an elevation of 500 meters above sea level) served as the administrative center of the district. The soldier-poet Mikhail Lermontov engaged in his fatal duel here in 1841, and a monument on the site attracted a constant stream of visitors. As perhaps befitting a spa that originated as a military cure station, Piatigorsk was famous for the treatment of syphilis, but it offered all the usual balneological therapies as well.<sup>39</sup> Essentuki and Zheleznovodsk, at 600 meters in elevation, developed later than Piatigorsk, but by the middle of the nineteenth century they too attracted a well-to-do clientele. Kislovodsk, located thirty-seven kilometers from Piatigorsk and situated at an elevation of 850 meters, had become the largest of the spa towns in early Soviet times. As in the other towns, the elaborate park served as the center of resort life. With the impressive imperial-era Grand Hotel at one end, the park extended through rows of tree-lined alleys connected to various drinking water stations. During the season, orchestras performed in the park twice a day. The entire central zone of the town had been closed to automobiles and carriages in 1929, and its compact size allowed patients to stroll leisurely as they took their cures. Easy excursions to nearby waterfalls, grottoes, and scenic views of Mount Elbrus added touristic variety to the mineral waters cure.

38. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 197, 202, 210, 221; *Kurorty. Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, 196. A 1934 publication listed 45,562 beds as of June 1934. *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 164. My calculation based on the capacities given for each institution in this guidebook comes to 29,855 beds. But government officials acknowledged that they lacked administrative knowledge of the facilities under their control. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24, l. 44.

39. *Kurorty SSSR* (1936); GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 32, 107.

The socialist transformation of Kislovodsk began in the mid-1920s with the gradual conversion of private villas and hotels to sanatoria and rest homes for government agencies. Construction of new facilities also appeared on the agenda of the first five-year plan, with modernist designs provided by some of the country's leading architects. Between 1928 and 1936, the four towns more than doubled their capacity, reporting ninety-three sanatoria and rest homes by 1936 (forty-three of these in Kislovodsk), with a total capacity of fifteen thousand beds.<sup>40</sup>

The resort city of Sochi will always be linked with the name of Joseph Stalin, who chose the spa for his summer residence and influenced the decision to turn Sochi into the premier national health resort. (Presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitrii Medvedev also vacationed both summer and winter in Sochi, and Putin was primarily responsible for the city's designation as a candidate—ultimately successful—to host the 2014 Winter Olympic Games.)<sup>41</sup> Before the revolution, Sochi was just one of a series of small towns along the eastern Black Sea coastline, a long narrow strip of habitable land at the base of the Caucasus mountain range. Accessible primarily by water (a railroad link did not extend there until 1925), Sochi itself had acquired a reputation as a “remote, dusty, and dirty little town,” but nearby villages gradually became desirable sites for summer dachas for tsarist officials, counts, princes, generals, and scientific and artistic notables.<sup>42</sup> Toward the start of the twentieth century, private entrepreneurs developed hotels, pensions, and elaborate parks that featured imported exotic plant species from around the world. The subtropical climate of the shore offered rich possibilities for botanical experimentation, but it also provided a breeding ground for the mosquitoes that transmitted malaria. Not as rich in mineral springs as the northern Caucasus slopes, the area finally developed its own spa in 1910, with the opening of the Matsesta baths, inland from the coast (and mosquitoes) and twenty meters above sea level.

Climate and topography contributed to the area's growing popularity in the early twentieth century. The moderating breezes off the Black Sea made the coastline enjoyable for about nine months a year, and the nearby mountain station of Krasnaia Poliana offered a readily accessible change of scenery and air. The subtropical vegetation and exotic local ethnic groups created a fairy-tale sense of escape that attracted more and more middle-class visitors to the grand Caucasus Riviera hotel and park and smaller pensions such as Svetlana (named after the heroine of a Zhukovskii ballad). When Soviet power came to the Black Sea coast, these private facilities and dachas fell under

40. *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 100–103; Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma ot-dykha*.

41. “If Putin wants it, they will build it.” Sochi taxi driver, 8 October 2006.

42. M. Ia. Rudakov, “Sochi-Matsesta k 20-letiiu Oktiabria,” *Voprosy kurortologii*, no. 5 (1937): 37; *Istoriia Sochi v otkrytykh i vospominaniakh*. Part 1, *Staryi Sochi. Zabytie stran-nytsy konets XIX–nachalo XX vv.* (Maikop, 2006), 22.

socialist control and converted to sanatoria and rest homes. In the mid-1920s, new construction of bath buildings and sanatoria at Matsesta expanded the medical capability of the fledgling seaside resort.<sup>43</sup>

In 1933, the Soviet Union's Central Executive Committee adopted a decision to make Sochi the new showplace of Soviet leisure culture. Plans called for the expansion of existing sanatoria and the construction of new ones. More important, Sochi's infrastructure received a massive influx of investment, including new sewage, electricity, and heating facilities, and the administrative and commercial parts of the town were relocated away from the shoreline. A broad and straight tree-lined boulevard (Stalin Prospect) replaced the narrow winding road along the seacoast; granite bridges with carved sculptures spanned the small rivers that flowed from the mountains to the sea; a landscaped terraced embankment, planted with cypresses, palms, magnolias, and other flowering trees rose up from the narrow pebble beaches. The country's leading architects lent their skills to design the new sanatoria and public buildings, including the nine hundred-seat Winter Theater. The much-photographed Voroshilov Central Red Army sanatorium, with its constructivist lines and modern funicular connecting the sanatorium's beach to the main buildings high above, became the symbol of the modern Soviet health resort, "not life, but paradise," as one rapt worker wrote her comrades back home.<sup>44</sup> By 1936, the Sochi area offered fifteen thousand beds to prospective resters and patients.

Beyond these three major centers, another thirty thousand sanatorium and rest home spaces were available in numerous small health spas across the country. Most of them lacked adequate funding and attracted mainly a local clientele. For Leningraders, the spa of Sestroretsk on the Gulf of Finland offered climate therapy with beach, park, polyclinic, and concert hall only twenty-two kilometers from the city's outskirts. Kazakhstan reported seven underfunded health spas in 1938, a typical complaint in these years.<sup>45</sup> Health resort investment followed vacationers' demands for rest cures in the traditional areas of the Black Sea and Caucasus Mountains.

High mountain spas gained in popularity in the 1930s. Teberda, located along the Sukhumi Military Highway in the Caucasian Karachaevo-cherkes Autonomous Oblast, had been known as a destination for tuberculosis patients since before the revolution. Despite its primitive waterworks and lack of electricity, the alpine resort attracted patients and vacationers with its cool summers and warm winters, the stunning beauty of its surroundings, and the picturesque journey itself. Tourists and alpinists as well as medical patients flocked to Teberda. By 1936, the site boasted three sanatoria (one belonging

43. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 121–23; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 52–54.

44. *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 145, 158; *Martenovka*, 30 May 1936.

45. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 308–310; *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 238–241; GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24, l. 14.

to the Commission for Help to Scientists) and five rest homes, along with several tourist camps. In addition to patients registered with these institutions, there was an increasing flow of patients without reservations. Given the site's lack of hotels, pensions, or central medical clinic, these patients lodged with private residents and practiced their own health regimen without the benefit of medical advice.<sup>46</sup>

### The Putevka and How to Get It

The voucher, or *putevka* (pronounced poo-TYOV-ka), entitled the recipient to a course of treatment, food, and lodging at a designated institution for a particular period of time. This piece of colored paper possessed a monetary value that represented the sum total of food and services to be provided, but the acquisition of a *putevka* was rationed by criteria other than price. Scarce spaces in sanatoria, pensions, and rest homes belonged first of all to those who needed them most. Officially, these were persons with medical conditions whose treatment would best benefit from the assigned health institution. Beyond this, industrial workers received official priority in the allocation of *putevki*, paid for by the country's health insurance fund or by individual enterprises. Yet this system of planned and rational distribution existed in permanent tension with a system in which money and connections counted as much as industrial labor and medical status. This tension would persist to the end of the Soviet era.

In the 1920s and 1930s, health resorts operated on a quasi-commercial basis: *putevki* carried a price based on costs, but they were distributed—not “sold”—through a network of *kurort* bureaus or by arrangement with enterprises or institutions.<sup>47</sup> The process began with a visit to the doctor, who would recommend the appropriate destination for the patient's condition. With the proper medical certificate, the prospective patient would then apply to his or her local factory committee, and if recommended for a subsidized course of treatment, the applicant would appear before a local *kurort* selection commission for final authorization. If the commission determined that the course of treatment was necessary, the patient would receive a free *putevka* and transport, with forgone salary paid by the state insurance system. If a patient wished to pay for the *putevka* out of pocket, a medical certificate or permission from the selection commission was still required.<sup>48</sup>

Rest home *putevki* were allocated through trade unions, who received spaces based on the harmful health consequences of their industry's work

46. GARF, f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41 (Main Kurort Administration conference, November 1939), ll. 163–74.

47. *Kurorty Abkhazii*, 146–147; GARF, f. A-483, op. 1, d. 31 (kurort director conference, December 1923), l. 32.

48. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 452–453; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 30 (materials on supply of *putevki*, 1935), ll. 11–13.

and on the size of their membership. Workers in individual enterprises who wished to spend their annual leave at a rest home could then apply through their factory committees for one of the available spaces. The factory's labor protection commission and medical staff provided documents for review by the local (city or region) allocation commission, and successful applicants would receive a putevka for an all-expenses-paid vacation to a particular rest home. (If the review turned up more serious medical problems, the applicant would in theory be directed to a health resort instead.)<sup>49</sup>

Allocation by medical need alone did not optimally utilize the health system. Perhaps the Soviet population was healthier than officials had realized, but heads of health spa institutions reported over and over that their tuberculosis sanatoria could not be filled with tuberculosis patients alone, that sometimes only half of their so-called patients needed any real treatment. Many patients arrived with putevki but without any medical certification whatsoever. A 1934 study in Kislovodsk suggested that fewer than 50 percent of patients in sanatoria there required medical treatment. Patients arrived at tuberculosis sanatoria for forty-five-day cures completely aware of their good health, while known tuberculosis patients were denied access. At Evpatoria in Crimea, 10 percent of patients had no medical reason to be there: "Many receive putevki as a prize, and instead of sending them to a rest home, they send them to us," taking spaces away from patients who genuinely needed treatment.<sup>50</sup>

From the point of view of the trade unions and Soviet labor officials, health resorts as "repair shops for workers" should give priority in their treatment and rest regimes to workers and particularly to industrial workers. This viewpoint clashed with that of public health specialists, who would continue to favor access rationed by medical need, not occupation.<sup>51</sup> Officially, the trade unions prevailed. In 1923 the Central Trade Union Council directed that 80 percent of sanatorium places should be reserved for workers, an arbitrarily large figure that gestured both to workers' status in the new regime and to their frail physical constitutions. In 1926 "workers" consisted of 6.5 percent of the entire income-earning Soviet population, "industrial workers" 2.7 percent. Even in the late 1930s, workers represented less than one-third of the economically active population.<sup>52</sup> Putevki for workers only were distinguished by special colors and could cost 50 percent less than putevki available to the general public. In addition, most or all of the cost would be

49. Beloborodov, "Printsipy," in *Doma otdykha 1920–23*, 49–51.

50. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 34, 74–75, 96, 160 (quote); d. 24, l. 9; GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24, l. 54; GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 237–38.

51. Sally Ewing, "The Science and Politics of Soviet Insurance Medicine," in Solomon and Hutchinson, *Health and Society in Revolutionary Russia*, 69–96.

52. *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 17 dekabria 1926 goda. Kratkie svodki* (Moscow, 1927–29), vol. 34, table 1, 2–3; *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1937 g. Kratkie itogi* (Moscow, 1991), 116, 121; *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda. Osnovnye itogi* (Moscow, 1992).

subsidized by state insurance, and workers received special discounts for rail travel to their destinations.<sup>53</sup>

Health and trade union organizations failed to achieve these ambitious quotas. In 1923 the health commissariat reported that instead of workers accounting for 80 percent of patients, they represented only 36 percent of the total, while white-collar employees (*sluzhashchie*) (less than 5 percent of the independent population in 1926) furnished 46 percent of kurort patients. Local unions ignored central directives and instead were sending “those who stood nearer to the directing organs of the trade union.”<sup>54</sup> Even early on in the Soviet period, connections mattered more than medical status or social position.

In October 1929 the Central Trade Union Council reiterated its requirement that 80 percent of kurort patients be production workers, but Communist Party investigators reported that officials continued to evade this policy. In 1930 workers constituted only 37 percent of patients at the best all-union resorts and only 65 percent overall. Too many putevki were obtained for cash or given away to party officials rather than workers. Trade unions allowed white-collar employees to purchase the putevki reserved for workers. Thus the state insurance fund reported that while workers traveling on free putevki to the Caucasus Mineral Waters accounted for 78 percent of all patients in 1930, many of them were in fact white-collar employees. Rest homes located in the prime resort areas served *sluzhashchie* exclusively. Even when engineers and technical personnel were reclassified as workers in 1930, their share in all-union sanatoria in 1930—46 percent in mineral water spas, 26 percent in seaside spas, 37 percent overall—remained well under the stipulated quotas. In 1931, a report about the abuse of putevki charged that six patients sent from a local miners’ union organization included one invalid, the wife of a foreman, the wife of the union chairman, an employee, his wife, and his child but not one genuine proletarian. Not only did workers find the climate resorts difficult to access, but they also had to settle for off-season putevki. The number of nonworker employees vacationing in health establishments tended to peak in the prime season from July to early October, and engineers were more likely than workers to find spaces in all-union kurorts in July.<sup>55</sup>

Amid continuing reports that “as a whole, the percentage of the worker group does not achieve the stipulated norms,” the health commissariat

53. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii, i doma otdykha*, 477–479. Eligible for the lowest of the three price tiers were ordinary workers and peasants, soldiers, invalids, medical personnel, and party members paying their own way. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 30, l. 22.

54. GARF, f. A-483, op. 1, d. 52 (correspondence on allocation of places in health spas, 1923), l. 8.

55. GARF, f. 5528, op. 6, d. 108, ll. 1–3, 6–8, 18; op. 4, d. 118 (social composition at Caucasus Mineral Waters resorts, 1931), ll. 35–39; other reports in f. 5528, op. 6, d. 220 (materials on allocation of resort places, 1933), l. 25; f. A-8042, op. 1, d. 5 (review of kurort work 1932), l. 36.

adopted new rules and policies in January 1933. It now defined the worker group to include industrial workers, engineering and technical personnel, scientists, teachers, and senior bookkeepers, and it decreed that this group should furnish no fewer than 76 percent of patients paid by the insurance fund at all rest homes and sanatoria and at least 60 percent of those in the all-union kurorts. The penalties for misusing a worker voucher ranged from being sent home to shaming in the press to criminal prosecution. On paper, these measures produced some improvement in possibilities for workers to receive treatment at all-union resorts. The Caucasus Mineral Waters group reported that the share of workers alone rose from 53 percent in 1933 to 64 percent in 1935; counting the additional “worker equivalents,” these percentages looked even more socially acceptable: 79 percent in 1933, 82.6 percent in 1935. Yet despite these gains, as one kurort director reported in 1935, unqualified patients continued to be sent on workers’ putevki. In one case, the director of a factory department arrived with a worker’s putevka, and when he was refused admission, the factory sent a telegram, explaining that “due to the lack of a worker, we sent you this patient. We ask you to accept this patient.” This sanatorium received a flood of such telegrams.<sup>56</sup>

The persistent manipulation of the putevki rules suggests that in the course of the 1930s, the health spa as an object of medicine had become transformed into an object of consumption, its use value (medical utility) enhanced by its sign value, the prestige of taking a vacation at an all-union resort. By the mid-1930s, a status hierarchy among vacation destinations had become clear. Industrial workers in fact received vacation putevki somewhat in excess of their share of the labor force overall, although far below the targets set by the regime, a shortfall repeatedly lamented in trade union and health commissariat discussions. The biggest losers were peasants, who represented 48 percent of the labor force in 1939 but who were denied the rights and privileges of ordinary Soviet citizens: only a small fraction received access to health establishments.<sup>57</sup> But nonindustrial workers who knew how to maneuver within the system ended up with putevki to the most attractive places at the optimal time of year. A 1933 report from the Commissariat of Public Health provides a detailed breakdown of the social composition of the all-union resorts. Production workers counted for an average of 34 percent, engineers and technical personnel 17 percent, white-collar employees (clerical workers and lower administrative staff) 11 percent. (See table 1.2.) In general, workers were underrepresented in Sochi, Kislovodsk, and the Crimean southern shore; they generated the largest share of patients in the old spas of Staraia Russa near Novgorod, Sergeevskii mineral springs in Kuibyshev oblast, and tuberculosis sanatoria in north-central Asia, where the treatment consisted

56. “As a whole,” GARF, f. A-8042, op. 1, d. 5, l. 35; f. 5528, op. 4, d. 148 (draft materials on social composition, 1933), l. 1; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 5, 115; “due to the lack of a worker,” d. 8, ll. 8, 166.

57. *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda. Osnovnye itogi*, 93.



**Table 1.2** Percentage of patients at all-union kurorts, 1933, by social composition

Social group	Sanatorium patients (%)	Pansion patients (%)
Production workers	33.8	23.9
Nonproduction workers	6.3	5.3
Workers in cooperatives	0.6	1
Workers now invalids	1	0.8
Other workers	0.7	
Share of workers who are shock workers	55.8	31.7
Engineering personnel	17.4	9.6
Teachers	1.9	1.4
Scientists	0.9	0.9
Accountants	1.6	1.9
Peasants	2.6	1.4
Of these, members of collective farms	93.2	88.7
University students from worker background	4.6	5.8
Medical personnel	0.7	0.5
Others on a par with workers	10.7	10
White-collar employees	11.4	22.4
Patients' spouses	3.1	8.6
Other nonworkers	0.3	1.2
Children under 16	2.0	5.2
Children 16–18	0.3	0.3
Party members as percentage of all patients	36.8	31.6

Source: GARF, f. A-8042, op. 1, d. 10.

of drinking mare's milk. The share of technical personnel was highest in Kislovodsk (27 percent) and Sochi (26 percent). Employees were also over-represented in Kislovodsk, Sochi, and the Crimean southern shore. They constituted an even larger share of patients renting accommodations in pansions in Crimea: 27.2 percent of such patients were employees, 25.2 percent workers. If sanatoria were repair shops for workers, the less medically intensive pansion vacation appealed more to those seeking pleasure, not a cure. Not surprisingly, the percentage of patients belonging to the Communist Party followed the trend of privilege: Party members constituted the largest share of patients in Kislovodsk (43.3 percent) and Sochi (42.9 percent). Among the Mineral Waters spa towns, Piatigorsk had the largest contingent of workers (40.8 percent) and the smallest group of Communists (36.3 percent).<sup>58</sup>

The "best resorts" in 1933 drew the most Party members, the most white-collar employees and engineers, the fewest workers, and the fewest children.

58. Piatigorsk's status seemed to be tarnished by its reputation as the place for the repair of a syphilitic body: "The old simple formula exists to this day: Piatigorsk is syphilis, syphilis is Piatigorsk." GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, l. 107.



(Schoolteachers, although the numbers are small, tend to track with workers rather than with employees.) A kurort's status could be roughly measured by the percentage of workers: the higher the status, the more nonworkers could be found there. Overall, the most desirable putevki took patients to all-union climate resorts during the peak summer months. The health commissariat itself recognized the attraction of these kurorts in setting a goal of only 60 percent workers, as opposed to 80 percent overall. Workers would be lucky to receive putevki to all-union balneological kurorts such as Staraia Russa, local sanatoria run by oblast and municipal organizations, or rest homes near their place of residence.

Increasingly in the 1930s, it was not sufficient to be an ordinary production worker in order to merit a putevka to a rest home or sanatorium. And despite the building boom that began in the 1930s, there would never be enough places to accommodate all who deserved them. Access to the health care vacation system became linked to exemplary performance as well as social position. The 1936 guide to kurorts of the Soviet Union explained that first priority would go to "recognized shock workers, skilled workers with at least two years of work seniority without violations of labor discipline." All other things equal, workers in the most dangerous departments of the leading industries should receive putevki before all others. At Moscow's Hammer and Sickle factory, this meant that "as a rule, the first to receive access to kurorts and rest homes will be the best Stakhanovites—production workers who perform well in their workshops." Within the resorts, the best rooms and facilities would be reserved for Stakhanovites.<sup>59</sup>

The 1936 Soviet constitution included the right to rest as an absolute entitlement of Soviet workers, and this phrase would appear again and again in propaganda films about the kurort system and in workers' own expressions of gratitude for the opportunity to enjoy this right.<sup>60</sup> How then did the regime justify unequal access to the system, particularly to its best vacation destinations? We might usefully distinguish between mobilizing inequalities, which served as part of the labor incentive system, and inequalities that represented more pernicious aspects of what has been termed the "hierarchy of consumption."<sup>61</sup>

Soviet planners never doubted that material incentives were required to interest workers in production, and they concentrated much attention on the most effective incentive systems, whether piece rates, shock work bonuses,

59. "Recognized shock workers," *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 30–31; "as a rule," *Martenovka*, 15 May 1936; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 14.

60. *Podarok Rodiny*, 1935 sound film, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov (RGAKFD), no. 3889; *Sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 1938 silent film with French subtitles, RGAKFD, no. 3764; *Pravo na otdykh*, 1939 sound film in English, RGAKFD, no. 3875; *Zdorov'e naroda*, 1940 silent film, RGAKFD, no. 4074; *Martenovka*, 5 June 1938; 17 June 1938; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 22 May 1938; 23 May 1938; 4 June 1938; 10 August 1938; 21 June 1940.

61. Elena Osokina, *Za fasadom "Stalinskogo izobilii": Raspredelenie i rynok v snabzhenii naseleniia v gody industrializatsii, 1927–1941* (Moscow, 1998).

or competitions.<sup>62</sup> Nonmaterial rewards were also important, and these were rationed to reward high productivity and compliant behavior. At Moscow's Elektrozavod, for example, workers received as salary only one-ninth of what they "earned"; the rest came through the social fund: housing, culture, education, medicine, insurance, and vacations.<sup>63</sup> The new material culture of the 1930s created "islands of abundance" to signal to all Soviet citizens a coming world of socialist plenty. Not all could expect to receive such benefits immediately, but workers had become accustomed to the logic of rationing, and they received the rare and occasional material bonus with gratitude. In this "gift economy," all rewards increased the recipients' dependence on and gratitude to the state.<sup>64</sup> Similar to the wage bargain, though, these gifts were seen by their recipients as reciprocal. Like Alexei Karenin, Soviet workers promised to justify their vacations with increased Stakhanovite energy upon their return.<sup>65</sup>

The Soviet state implemented a hierarchy of consumption as a way to ration scarce commodities and services and to reward the most essential contributors to the state project. These official inequalities existed in all areas of economic life and were widely understood, if not always accepted. Other reasons for workers' underrepresentation at health resorts included the high cost (in time and money) of transportation: a Moscow factory worker who received a two-week putevka to Sochi would spend six of those days on the road: "They no sooner get to Sochi than they have to leave." Factory workers' two-week annual leave made it difficult to utilize a putevka for the standard forty-five-day cure in a health spa unless they received additional sick leave from their insurance funds. Less palatable to the regime were examples of the manipulation of the system by those with inside access to such goods. Employees traveling to southern spas with a red or green worker's putevka not only received a coveted space but paid the worker rate for the privilege: no wonder insiders used their positions to send themselves and their relatives instead of genuine workers and then maintained "there were no workers" to send. A woman printer, Matveeva, at Moscow's First Model print shop wrote to her local shop newspaper that she had waited three years for a putevka: she had become ill in 1930, and in 1932 the local spa selection commission approved her treatment at the Caucasian Mineral Waters. But for three years, her factory committee could not find a putevka for her. "I am 'treated' with promises. . . . [The factory committee chairman] said, 'Let them give me five hundred rubles, and I will buy you a putevka.'"<sup>66</sup> Ordinary channels favored those with connections or money.

62. See Diane P. Koenker, *Republic of Labor: Russian Printers and Soviet Socialism, 1918–1930* (Ithaca, NY, 2005), chaps. 4 and 7; Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism*; Andrei Markevich and Andrei Sokolov, "Magnitka bliz Sadovogo Kol'tsa": *Stimuly k rabote na Moskovskom zavode "Serp i molot," 1883–2001 gg.* (Moscow, 2005).

63. Zhuravlev and Mukhin, "Krepost' sotsializma," 62–63.

64. Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), 83–84; Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne*, 148.

65. *Martenovka*, 30 June 1940, but there are many, many examples.

66. "They no sooner get to Sochi," GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, l. 8; d. 131, l. 80; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 2, l. 86; "I am 'treated,'" *Pravda poligrafista*, 4 June 1935.

Health officials devoted considerable effort to monitoring the class composition of their patients, even if this effort revealed widespread abuse of the putevka system. They were much less interested in the gender and age composition of those who received treatment. Ethnic representation in the health resort system received barely a mention.<sup>67</sup> Officials acknowledged that women found it difficult to accept putevki to rest homes because they had no place to leave their children; this problem led to suggestions that special homes be organized for mothers and children together. Health officials in 1935 acknowledged that it was the “political obligation” of trade unions to increase the percentage of women going to health resorts, and the director of the Caucasian Mineral Waters group reported progress on this front: the share of women had risen from 17.4 percent in 1934 to 20.4 percent in 1935 (compared with their 39.5 percent share of the labor force in 1937). The share of women was highest in Kislovodsk: 25 percent in 1935, the largest of the four Caucasus spa towns and by other indicators the most prestigious.<sup>68</sup> “Normal” holiday life required a decent ratio between men and women.

The role of families in state-sponsored health travel posed a special conundrum. If the purpose of a rest home or health spa vacation was to heal or repair the individual laborer’s body, then the putevka should be awarded only to those individuals. Removing an ailing worker from the stresses of family life might even help the healing process. The superiority of the socialist system of vacation, insisted the 1936 guide to health resorts, lay in the scientific process of patient selection: treatment was given to those whose bodies needed it most, not to those who had the means to pay for their leisure. Family members might well interfere with this process. Rest homes for mothers and children turned out to be counterproductive: vacationing with their children, mothers did not rest. “Experience shows that small children completely ruin the mother’s entire course of treatment. A sick mother has the right to rest away from her children.” The sanatorium’s medical value of quiet, calm, and change of situation dictated that unless the patient was so weak as to need round-the-clock assistance, family members should stay home. Combining the medically needy with those who came only for relaxation, argued the director of the Kislovodsk resort in 1935, only created chaos and dissatisfaction.<sup>69</sup>

“Family” often meant spouse: the Soviet resort did not even cater to married couples. As for the larger nuclear family, Soviet sanatoria were not especially suitable for children and lacked the appropriate facilities. For seriously ill children, special sanatoria provided age-specific treatment. For others, the pioneer camp offered a healthful summer vacation, freeing parents from the need to supervise their children during the summer. The consumer

67. An exception is a brief acknowledgment of the problem of serving national minorities in the health care system by the head of the social insurance fund, N.M. Petrov, “Rol’ sotsstrakha v organizatsii razvitiia rabocheho otdykha,” in *Zdravookhranenie i rabochii*, 87.

68. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, ll. 88, 239; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 6–7, 117.

69. *Kurorty SSSR* (1923), 52; *Kurorty SSSR* (1936), 21; Rykova, “Opyt organizatsii Domov Otdykha,” *Doma otdykha 1920–1923*, 20 (quote); GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, l. 37.

cooperative trade union's rest home planned in 1936 to serve 1,300 adults and 140 children, but in the end only 32 children joined their parents at the home: the rest stayed in the city at kindergartens and day care centers.<sup>70</sup> Very few adult workers at Moscow's Trekhgornaia manufacturing plant received putevki to southern resorts in the 1930s, judging by reports in the factory newspaper, but 88 of their children spent three summer months at Gelendzhik, on the Caucasus Black Sea shore, repairing their health in places "where once only bourgeois sons and daughters could rest." The send-off, letters home, and return of these children were the highlights of the summer season.<sup>71</sup>

Some married vacationers preferred to travel alone for their medical treatment so that they could not only rest well but also enjoy a temporary change of sexual partners. At the height of the Great Terror in 1937, university student Mary Leder escaped the tense political climate with a six-week putevka to the Red Army sanatorium in Crimea. "The atmosphere was calculatedly flirtatious. Territories were staked out, with each new arrival appraised and evaluated. My two roommates, young married women, were perfectly open about looking for men to pair off with." Mary's unmarried status was deemed too complicated for a casual affair: she might expect romance to lead to a wedding. A married officer who had taken a fancy to her quickly sought a safer liaison as soon as he learned that Mary was single. Among workers too, the summer fling was a familiar feature of rest homes and sanatoria, judging by a series of feuilletons in the printing workers' union journal. In one story, a wife quizzed her middle-aged husband on his return from Crimea: "They say that married men behave like bachelors, and all run after women." The husband admitted that his roommate had engaged in "immoral behavior," but he declared that he himself had remained chaste and only sat up talking with one "Marusia" until 11:00 p.m. In the 1936 Mikhail Verner film *A Girl Hurries to a Rendezvous*, a henpecked industrial manager on a solo vacation relishes the attentions of pretty young women in a Caucasus Mineral Waters resort. But before he can consummate an affair, his suspicious wife turns up to haul him back home. Complaints about corruption in the trade union included accusations that young women, often of the wrong social class, received putevki to the union rest home ahead of more senior and deserving men.<sup>72</sup> Vacationing male officials wished to spend their time with attractive female companions.

Did Soviet medical vacationers prefer this occasional opportunity for a change of sexual scene, or were such casual flirtations an unintended

70. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1478 (annual reports on rest homes, 1935–1946), ll. 58–59.

71. *Znamia trekhgorki*, 9 May 1936 (quote); 7 June 1936; 17 August 1936; 4 June 1938; 11 July 1938; 18 July 1938; 1 August 1938; *Martenovka*, 6 July 1940.

72. "The atmosphere was," Mary Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia* (Bloomington, IN, 2001), 132; "They say that married men," *Moskovskii pechatnik*, no. 22 (June 1926): 9, 5; *Pechatnik*, 13 July 1929, 11; *Devushka speshit na svidaniia*, dir. Mikhail Verner (Belgoskino, 1936); Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Sankt Peterburga (TsGA SPb), f. 4804, op. 10, ed. khr. 4, ll. 449–50 (printers' union congress); Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv istoriko-politicheskikh dokumentov Sankt Peterburga, f. 435, op. 1, d. 59, l. 205ob. (correspondence of party cell, 1925).



A family on vacation in Anapa, on the Black Sea, summer 1929.

consequence of the inability of spouses and families to travel together? Officials argued in 1932 that workers wanted to rest together with their families; they even refused rest home putevki because “they don’t want to spend their vacation time away from their families.” The head of the social insurance fund proposed that a certain percentage of spaces in rest homes be reserved for families. Managers at Moscow’s Elektrozavod realized that providing vacation putevki for workers as well as their families helped to motivate workers and strengthen their loyalty. “The question of the need to allocate family-discounted putevki to the best workers was often raised, and especially actively from the start of the 1930s in connection to sending the best shock workers to Black Sea resorts, where they dreamed of going together with their families.” In 1935 the plant decided to devote a separate wing of its rest home for the use of families, and by the second half of the 1930s, family vacations were widespread at Elektrozavod. Also in 1935, officials at Caucasus Mineral Waters noted the new phenomenon of patients arriving with their entire families and demanding separate rooms (instead of sharing with strangers of the same sex).<sup>73</sup> Despite such evidence of popular demand for the opportunity to spend vacation time together as a family, the health resort and rest home system made only minimal adaptations. The idea of rest as individual recuperation remained dominant, trumping the ideal of a family vacation.

### The Spa Regime

Regardless of the growing tension between carefree fun and medical purpose in the 1930s Soviet spa vacation, the spa regime emphasized the strictly utilitarian side of these vacations. Once the patient-vacationer had arrived at the health resort or rest home, the science of medicine governed the daily routine. The repair of the human motor required a sophisticated and structured medical workshop in order to produce the optimal results.

A new arrival submitted immediately to a preliminary medical examination and a bath. At a health spa, the patient received special underwear and toiletries; personal underwear would be disinfected and returned to the patient at the end of the stay. After a series of more thorough medical examinations, the patient would be issued a medical booklet outlining all the prescribed procedures to be followed: each patient received the individualized treatment best suited to his or her medical condition. The language of medicine pervaded the culture of the vacation. Even if the “healing powers of nature are the strongest medicine” (sun, fresh air, water), their incorrect utilization could cause serious harm. “This is why *the patient must above all*

73. “They don’t want to spend,” GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, l. 120; d. 131, l. 40; Petrov, “Rol’ sotsstrakha v organizatsii razvitiia rabochego otdykha,” in *Zdravookhranenie i rabochii*, 85; “The question of the need,” Zhuravlev and Mukhin, “*Krepost’ sotsializma*,” 195–196; GARF, 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 14.



*submit absolutely to all of the doctors' orders.*"<sup>74</sup> The chief administrative officer of each sanatorium and rest home was the head doctor, who supervised not only all medical services but also the institution's cultural and political program and all housekeeping tasks. Rest homes followed a less rigorous medical regime on the assumption that their residents suffered only from fatigue, not serious illness. The rest home served instead as a "school of sanitary education."

Rational rest and treatment required strict discipline in their administration. Like factories and spas in nineteenth-century France, Soviet rest homes and sanatoria operated by the rule of the bell. The schedule itself constituted one of the most important therapeutic aspects of the health institution. Kurort guidebooks outlined the prescribed regime; these rules would undergo revisions in the years to come, but the basic structure of the medical rest remained the same. Patients would rise with the bell, make their beds, and clean their rooms. Temperatures were monitored twice daily, and meals were served precisely four times a day. Patients could not receive visitors or even congregate in their sleeping rooms during the day, nor could they consume food there. Every institution insisted on two hours of scrupulously enforced afternoon rest, the "dead hours." Card games, consumption of alcoholic beverages, and excessive noise were all prohibited. Dancing was possible only with a doctor's permission. "The sanatorium is not a house for amusement, but a repair shop for toilers."<sup>75</sup>

The rigid kurort regime sought to preserve the optimal healing effects of the spa vacation, but it also served to discipline and tame what was seen as the unruly residue of working-class culture. Pleading for more power to punish violators of the kurort regime, the head of the Crimean group of sanatoria, Ivanov, insisted that "even workers" now demanded that all resters conform to the kurort regime, "so that during the dead hours people don't walk around drunk, yelling, singing, carrying on, that they don't walk around half-dressed, as is common now, only in shorts or women in their halter tops, because this does not only have a certain moral significance, but on the southern shore of Crimea it is even harmful to one's health, because excess exposure to sunlight here causes insomnia." Too much sunlight led to insomnia, and insomnia led to seeking out music in restaurants or to people's returning late from the cinema singing loudly and crudely.<sup>76</sup>

As an alternative to the factory model with its bells and discipline, some health experts had proposed a different approach for the kurort regime: not a workshop but an antiworkshop. The change of scenery provided by a putevka to a health resort should require a complete change of environment.

74. Lifshits, "Mediko-sanitarnoe obsluzhivanie," 31–32; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, l. 149; Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 458 (quote; emphasis in original); GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 11–12; d. 8, ll. 39–41.

75. *Kurorty Abkhazii*, 80–87 (quote, 80); Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii, i doma otdykha*, 471–472.

76. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 69–70.

Substituting mountain and sea views for smokestacks and grimy cityscapes produced significant benefits, but the health spa regime also prohibited any activity that would lead to additional stress, including politics as well as drinking, cards, and inappropriate music. Public life beyond the walls of sanatoria should also be regulated to minimize noise and distraction. Medical studies dating from the early 1930s had proven conclusively the harmful effect of noise on the nervous system: officials proposed playing music on public loudspeakers only during specified times of day and rerouting traffic away from kurort centers. How could patients rest during the quiet hours when all around them they could hear steamship whistles, trucks, and barking dogs from 4:00 a.m. until late at night? The excessive regimentation of the kurort regime, argued some officials, undermined the therapeutic effects of the change of scenery and quiet repose. Compulsion should play no role in a healing vacation. We need to end bells, said the director of a Moscow oblast sanatorium; it was insulting for patients who had finished their meals to wait until the head doctor gave everyone permission to leave the dining room. By the late 1930s, the bell system had been discontinued in many kurorts, and patients were no longer denied a meal if they arrived late to the dining room.<sup>77</sup>

This more relaxed regime had already become a staple at rest homes. At first, rest home patients followed a regime quite similar to those of kurort patients: sleeping rooms could be occupied only during sleeping times, and a patient who came late to the dining room forfeited that meal. "From dinner until evening tea all resters must lie down: neither games nor reading books or newspapers nor conversations during this time are permitted." Experts reasoned that workers who spent their factory time in independent activity and in lively political life needed the opposite conditions in the rest home. "A worker landing in a rest home becomes a machine needing repair, and he should not engage in any kind of activism that could increase the loss of his vital forces."<sup>78</sup> But officials assessing the function of rest homes in 1932 estimated that only 25 percent of those who came to rest homes needed the enforced quiet of the kurort regime. For the others, the regime quickly became boring—one foreign visitor even compared the rest home to a prison—and many abandoned their paid vacations early rather than to submit to the obligatory quiet hours. As a rule, the rest home regime offered more free time and more varied activities to its vacationers. It was intended to encourage a kind of socialist "individualism": "not that [bourgeois] individualism [*individualizm*] that we unanimously condemn, but an individuality [*individual'nost'*] that produces the most harmonious development of the human personality in the communist system." This

77. *Kurorty SSSR* (1923), 50–51; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 166, 37, 207; D. I. Mikheles, "Shum na kurortakh i bor'ba s nim," *Voprosy kurortologii*, no. 4 (1939): 41–43; Danishevskii, "Problema massovogo rabochego otdykha," 77; GARF, f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 226–227.

78. "From dinner until evening tea," *Doma otdykha 1924–1925*, 64–65; "worker landing in a rest home," GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132, l. 78 (the theory about activism's effect on vital forces was attributed to "bourgeois" Ukrainian physiologists).



included lessons in science, technology, and foreign languages—and meals taken whenever the rester felt hungry, not by the bell.<sup>79</sup>

Having settled in and learned the rules of the kurort regime, the patient began a course of treatment, which consisted of three elements: medical procedures, diet, and cultural activities. Sanatoria scheduled medical therapies for the morning hours between breakfast and midday dinner, all administered according to the doctor's prescription in the patient's medical booklet. (Stakhanovites received the best treatment times.)<sup>80</sup> At balneological resorts such as Mineral Waters, these therapies might include mineral water or mud baths. Drinking mare's milk (*kumys*) was the featured treatment in the resorts of central Asia and Kazakhstan. Patients might also receive electrotherapy, light therapy, or massages. Most widespread, of course, were the so-called climate therapies: sun baths, sea bathing, outdoor rest away from the direct sunlight, and breathing fresh sea breezes and the aromas of plants. Medical staff strictly monitored the length of time the patients received these treatments, told them when to turn over, and chased them out of the water at the end of their prescribed swims. A patient could enter the water or lie on the beach *only* with a doctor's order.

Toward the end of the 1920s, health advocates recommended more active forms of treatment be added to the health resort regimen. "Medical physical culture"—supervised calisthenics and sporting activities such as volleyball—slowly gained acceptance in the 1930s. Controlled walks and excursions to local sites of touristic interest also complemented the strict application of mineral water and sun. A final element of a patient's cure, "labor therapy," provided a transition back to a normal work routine. In the 1930s, some patients were permitted to engage in ten to fifteen minutes of light garden work. Doctors were supposed to supervise every aspect of the patient's treatment; they visited the patients' wards every day, and they monitored the progress of the cure with extended examinations every five days.<sup>81</sup>

In Soviet health establishments, the pleasures of the table became one more element of the therapeutic regime. "The intake of food should be considered a medical procedure on which depends the success of the cure; one should focus all attention on this procedure, do not engage in superfluous conversation, reading, arguments and do not arrive for meals in an overly fatigued condition." In both rest homes and sanatoria, the success of the vacation was measured by the amount of a patient's weight gain, testimony to the imperial legacy of poverty and the limited access to nutritious food by ordinary Soviet citizens in a culture of rationing.<sup>82</sup>

79. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 131, ll. 75–76; d. 132, ll. 1–2, 21, 247–251 (quote, ll. 247–248).

80. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 14.

81. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 69, 79; d. 24, ll. 71–72, 13; d. 8, l. 46; B. Ia. Shimshelevich, "O rezhime bol'nykh v Kislovodske v sviazi s primeneniem fizkul'tury," *Voprosy kurortologii*, no. 3 (1937): 112–115; Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 92–96, 185–188, 264–265.

82. Gol'dfail' and Iakhnin, *Kurorty, sanatorii i doma otdykha*, 470 (quote); Lifshits, "Mediko-sanitarnoe obsluzhivanie," 39–40; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 63; op. 3, d. 1478, l. 16.

Along with their medical booklets, sanatorium patients received table assignments and customized diets based on their diagnosed conditions. The sanatorium dining room typically consisted of tables seating four persons each, set with linens and decorated with flowers. In both rest homes and sanatoria, the dining room and kitchen block constituted the most important physical feature of the establishment (although in summer, sojourners at rest homes might take their meals in open-air dining pavilions). Uniformed waitresses served the meals. Beginning in 1935, the spas in Sochi initiated a “semirestaurant” system of meals: patients would order from a menu two days in advance, giving them more choice and allowing the kitchen staff to secure the needed food items to make up the meals. In some cases, patients could order on the spot, selecting from two to eight different dishes in each course. This system soon spread to other kurort centers.<sup>83</sup>

Patients and resters ate four meals a day, with the main meal taken usually at 1:00 p.m. Breakfast came at 8:00 a.m., a light snack was available at 4:00 p.m. to break the dead hours fast, and supper was served at 7:00 p.m. In some places, patients received an additional bedtime snack of milk and a pastry at 9:00 p.m. In 1924 the health commissariat published a set of recommended two-week menus for use in rest homes. On the second Monday of the session, for example, breakfast would consist of cocoa made with milk, white bread, butter, and oats cooked in milk. The three-course dinner began with mushroom soup with vermicelli, continued with Viennese veal cutlet with potatoes and cucumbers, and concluded with apple puree. Afternoon tea included white bread and butter, and supper consisted of meat roulade with rice, a glass of milk, and tea. Meals were planned to provide variety during the course of the session, with meat, fish, vegetables, and dairy products (plus an occasional egg but no chicken) all on the menu. To be sure, these were norms, not actually served meals. Moscow printers commented positively on the “tasty and filling” diet in one rest home in 1927, but elsewhere an open letter to the union journal complained about the meager food portions—the writers were alive and well, but no thanks to the cook. Propaganda films from the period depict a regime of plenty: a truckload of bread being unloaded at a Leningrad rest home in 1924; a sanatorium farm (pigs, cows, chickens) and close-ups of each of the day’s meals (eggs, sausage, cheese, soup, oranges, butter) in a 1927 film.<sup>84</sup>

The collectivization-induced famine of the early 1930s brought noticeable changes to the dietary regime in the health establishments. Central supply agencies could no longer guarantee adequate provisions, and individual sanatoria, kurorts, and rest homes had to seek provisions on the open market or

83. *Sochinskaiia pravda*, 6 June 1935; GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 62; f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, l. 218; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 2, l. 60.

84. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 63; *Doma otdykha 1924–1925*, 59–61; *Pechatnik*, 15 June 1927, 18; *Pechatnik*, 15 August 1928, 19; *Dom otdykha na Krestovskom ostrove v Leningrade*, 1924–1940, silent film, RGAKFD, no. 1221; *Zdravitsa TsK Vserossiiskogo profsoiuzsa sakharnikov*, 1925–1927, silent film, RGAKFD, no. 248.



Factory workers dining at a one-day rest home near Moscow, 1932. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 243650. Used with permission of the archive.

establish their own proprietary farms. Resters in 1933 complained that the rest home issued them only six hundred grams of bread, compared with the thousand grams they received daily at home; one rest home's meals were so meager that patients used their own money to buy additional meals at a canteen outside the grounds. Even when quantities were sufficient to provide the required daily caloric intake, between 4,000 and 4,500 calories, patients complained about the quality and the variety of the meals they received. Menus from Sochi's Krasnaia Moskva sanatorium in August 1933 (collected as part of an investigation into a case of food poisoning) indicate a marked reduction of meat: fishcakes, tomato, butter, coffee, and milk for breakfast; pureed carrot soup, "meat puree" with butter, and fruit kissel (blancmange) for dinner; tea with cheese pastry; and tomato and cucumber salad, tea, and a roll for supper.<sup>85</sup> By the middle of the 1930s, as more and more places operated their own farms, resters publicly praised the rest home food as "tasty and varied," but complaints persisted. Now, however, the blame fell on a shortage of skilled cooks rather than food products. Interviewing a potential

85. GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 131; d. 132; op. 6, d. 220, ll. 7–7ob.; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 81, 30–31.

chef for the Nal'chik sanatorium, the head doctor asked the candidate if he understood proteins, fats, and calories: the applicant, who claimed ten years' experience, admitted he "had never cooked with those foods." Most ambulatory patients fell completely outside the medical dining regime: they had to either bring their food with them or pay for meals themselves in their pan-sions or in local restaurants or cafés, undermining the medical benefit of their kurort visit.<sup>86</sup>

To fill the time between medical procedures, meals, and rest, and to add cultural therapy to the healing mission of the rest homes and sanatoria, health officials advocated a variety of cultural and recreational activities for patients and resters. As with the entire resort experience, such activities were saturated with purpose. Here in socialist health enterprises there would be no casinos to excite patients and no drinking establishments to undo the beneficial effects of the day's rational and healing therapies. Cultural activities stimulated the patient's intellect and offered new, fresh, and interesting material for psychic renewal. Similar to the measured doses of sunbathing and saltwater, cultural uplift also came in prescribed amounts tailored to the needs of the particular clients. Experts wrote that the low cultural levels of workers at rest homes in the early 1920s meant that they needed to receive cultural enlightenment in small, easily digestible amounts.<sup>87</sup> Later in the 1930s, however, the "growing cultural demands" of workers and other resters required more sophisticated and varied forms of recreation and culture.

In the 1920s, rest home organizers developed ambitious and detailed programs for the enlightenment of their vacationers. While their counterparts in sanatoria were receiving medical treatments, rest homers would head to the library for reading and lectures or take scientifically planned nature hikes in the woods and fields. Before supper, they could return to the library, practice on musical instruments, or gather in small groups to prepare the home's wall newspaper. The evening hours brought lectures, concerts, and political agitation activities such as living newspapers and agitation trials: serious fun alternated with more entertaining activities in order to keep the attention of resters with little cultural or political background. "Amateur evenings" (*vechera samodeiatel'nosti*) possessed their own intrinsic value, and their programs of folk dances, balalaika playing, brass band numbers, and amateur skits became a staple of the Soviet vacation experience. Such activities offered resters and patients the opportunity to take active part in their therapies, to learn to appreciate creative work, and to develop habits of public speaking and group performance, all qualities they could continue to employ once they had returned to everyday life. In practice, shortages made fulfillment

86. *Znamia trekhgorki*, 29 July 1936; 8 July 1938; 23 July 1938; 10 August 1938; *Martnovka*, 16 June 1935; 6 July 1938; GARF, f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 218 (quote), 172.

87. L. E. Fedynskaia, "Kul'turnaia i politiko-prosvetitel'naia rabota v Domakh Otdykha," in *Doma otdykha 1920–1923*, 65–66.



Outdoor education: a group of workers from the Red October factory listening—or not listening—to a speaker in the “bosom of nature,” on the lower Volga River, 1932. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 244848. Used with permission of the archive.

of these plans difficult. One patient wrote in 1927 from Kislovodsk that the sanatorium reading room lacked newspapers and he couldn’t afford to pay the fee to enroll in the city’s library. With one amateur evening a week, “time passed very slowly.”<sup>88</sup>

Attempts to develop cultural activities that were integral to the life of the kurorts continued to falter into the 1930s, largely because of the huge difficulty in finding qualified cultural organizers. Low salaries failed to attract educated and trained staff to the main resort areas; abysmal living conditions made it difficult to keep them once they had arrived. Many cultural workers sought these positions as a way to win a paid vacation in the south; having received their own cure, they resigned and returned to their regular jobs.

88. *Doma otdykha 1924–1925*, 69–70, 115; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1478; d. 1495 (trade union conference on rest homes and sanatoria, February 1941), l. 48; f. 5228, op. 3, d. 131; op. 6, d. 164 (correspondence on kurort treatment), ll. 109ob–110 (quote); Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv moskovskoi oblasti (TsGAMO), f. 4179, op. 1, d. 436 (correspondence on worker rest), ll. 13–16. Resters at Hammer and Sickel’s rest home also complained about the lack of activities: *Martenovka*, 28 May 1935; 10 July 1935; 15 July 1938.

As a result, resort directors reported everywhere that their cultural activities lacked imagination and interest.<sup>89</sup>

In the big kurort centers, however, the resort administrations received a share of the cost of a putevka in order to organize professional entertainment for the patients. This in turn reinforced their prestige and appeal. Agreements with the state concert organization brought “the best orchestras in the country” to Kislovodsk and Sochi. Resorts also hired musicians for their own local orchestras during the season, and guest artists made regular visits to the leading spas (trading two or three concerts for a four- or five-week cure). Patients from Moscow demanded “the best soloists,” those from Leningrad “the best singers.” The leading theater companies from Moscow and Leningrad made regular visits to the south to entertain vacationers, and resorts in the southern shore of Crimea organized their own theater troupe. Film enjoyed great popularity, accounting for one-third of the programming at Mineral Waters in 1935 (see table 1.3 below), but it also generated dissatisfaction. Sound projectors were in short supply, so most resorts could show only old silent films: only Piatigorsk, Yalta, and Sochi had installed sound systems by 1935. Spa patients demanded first-run films, not damaged and worn-out films that had been shown across the whole country before arriving in the south.<sup>90</sup> Increasingly, resort entertainment took on a commercial flavor, as kurort administrations charged admission fees to attend film showings and concerts in order to finance the entertainment their patients preferred.

Rest home vacations in the 1930s offered simpler pleasures. Most offered billiards and game tables for chess and checkers players; the athletically inclined could play volleyball and *gorodki* (a Russian version of skittles), while others looked on. Evening entertainments included films, concerts, and the ubiquitous amateur shows. Rest homes now began to stockpile musical

**Table 1.3** Cultural activities in Caucasian Mineral Waters spas for 1935

Type of program	Number of events	Percentage of total
Cinema	1,157	36.3
Excursions	598	18.8
Concerts	577	18.1
Lectures	472	14.8
Amateur evenings	382	12
Total	3,186	100

Source: GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 24, l. 135.

89. GARF, f. 5527, op. 4, d. 131, ll. 33, 44–45, 69; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 2, l. 73; f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 215, 230; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 8, l. 28; op. 3, d. 1495, l. 62; op. 1, d. 27 (conference on kurort cultural services, with the editors of *Trud*, April 1935), l. 8; op. 3, d. 1495, ll. 13, 48.

90. GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 27, ll. 28, 5, 14; f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, l. 219.





Outdoor activities at a rest home in Darasun, a spa town in Chita oblast, 1936. Photographer: Zel'ma. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0266198. Used with permission of the archive.

instruments along with their chess and checkers sets. And there was dancing. The outdoor dance floor at a rest home belonging to a Moscow branch of the machine-building union operated daily from 11:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., with activities coordinated by a paid mass organizer and accordion player. Every day featured “mass dances, games, contests for the best performance of folk, Western, and ballroom dances.” In the intervals between dances, the mass organizer led games like political quizzes and brain-teasers. Elsewhere, dances were the only thing that the cultural workers organized. At Hammer and Sickles’s rest home, workers grumbled that the cultural organizers should be more active: they wouldn’t teach new songs, and the accordionist refused to play.<sup>91</sup>

### Pleasure or Purpose?

Propaganda films made about Soviet health resorts in the second half of the 1930s projected an image of abundance, care, and equality to a capitalist

91. TsGAMO, f. 4179, op. 1, d. 436, l. 15 (quote); GARF, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1495, ll. 48, 74; *Martenovka*, 10 July 1935; 15 July 1938.

world digging out from a severe depression and contemplating a socialist alternative to capitalist modernity. For an English-speaking audience, a film emphasized social equality: patients came to Soviet health resorts “from all walks of life”: an aviation worker, a Donbass miner, a collective farm worker, and a military lieutenant sat together at chess; dominoes players included a surgeon, railway engineer, plant director, and shop foreman. The French language film included footage of nude sunbathing. But in addition, these films and those directed to the Russian-speaking audience emphasized the unique Soviet combination of medicine, luxury, contemporaneity, and fun. Images of medical treatments taken in up-to-date facilities, provided by caring nurses and physicians in the cleanest whites, alternated with beach scenes of happy bathers plunging into the surf. Everywhere young couples—even at the Red Army sanatorium in Sochi—strolled on the pathways, danced elegantly on handsome outdoor terraces, or paddled their kayaks on the waves. Automobiles, smooth new highways, and glistening white constructivist sanatorium buildings conveyed the sense of the new. The therapeutic value of a spa vacation received its affirmation in images of nurses monitoring their patients’ vital signs, the consumption of nutritious fruit and mineral water, electric sunlamps, and healing mineral water



Souvenir photograph from a Yalta vacation, 24 September 1938.



showers.<sup>92</sup> But the overwhelming impression these films conveyed was a sense of happiness, abundance, and fun, a Soviet health vacation that was no longer solely devoted to mending the human motor.

Belying the images of plenty conveyed in the films, concerned health officials admitted to the fact of shrinking capacities in 1938. Financial difficulties took their toll, resulting particularly in the inability to recruit and to retain skilled medical staffs. One veteran official noted the critical shortages of basic items such as bed linen as well as the drying up of construction funds. But others pointed to incorrect planning decisions and misplaced priorities favoring luxury over medicine. In line with the third five-year plan's emphasis on improved living and cultural conditions, the emphasis at the central health resorts seemed to be on "fewer but better." Bed linens were sacrificed in order to purchase sculpture, paintings, and fancy carpets. Patients such as those from Hammer and Sickles noted and appreciated the "cozy rooms with nice furniture," excellent food, and entertainment every evening, but it was hard to argue that such amenities did more to improve the patients' overall health than an adequate supply of physicians and medical staff.<sup>93</sup>

In fact, there was much evidence that the purposeful goal of a rational Soviet health spa vacation had become overshadowed by a preference for comfort, fun, and amusement. By the end of the 1930s the kurort regime had vanished: patients came and went from the dining room as they pleased and took second helpings if they felt like it, even if not medically necessary. Officials from the health commissariat protested this loss of medical purpose. "The very profile of the health spas has changed into an institution for having fun, not for medicine. Resort towns now have beer bars and restaurants," lamented a health commissariat official. The head medical doctor now ceded authority to the sanatorium's lay director. In proprietary sanatoria that were outside the jurisdiction of the trade union medical authorities, standards disappeared entirely. Treatment had become optional and the evening entertainment more dominant, attracting not only patients but the civilian population from all over, dancing with the medicine left out.<sup>94</sup>

The transformation of the Soviet sanatorium from an institution of rest and recuperation to a holiday resort appeared to be well under way by the second half of the 1930s, long before the famous shift toward the consumer

92. *Podarok Rodiny*, 1935 sound film, RGAKFD, no. 3889; *Sanatorii i doma otdykha*, silent film with French subtitles, 1938, RGAKFD, no. 3764; *Pravo na otdykh*, 1939 sound film in English, RGAKFD, no. 3875; *Zdorov'e naroda*, 1940 silent film, RGAKFD, no. 4074.

93. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 7, 10, 14, 36–37, 51, 72; f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 107, 174, 215; "Bystro i reshitel'no likvidirovat' posledstviia vreditel'stva na kurortakh," *Voprosy kurortologii*, nos. 1–2 (1938): 3–7; "Voprosy tret'ego piatiletnogo plana. K voprosu o rekonstruktsii kurortov SSSR v tret'im piatiletke," *Voprosy kurortologii*, no. 4 (1937): 84; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1478, ll. 15, 58; *Martenovka*, 28 June 1938; 4 July 1938.

94. GARF, f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 227–229, 231; f. 9228, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 37 (quote), 39, 42; f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1495, l. 48.

under the Khrushchev regime of the 1950s and 1960s. The film *A Girl Hurries to a Rendezvous* illustrated the new disdain for medical purpose. One of the protagonists, the henpecked manager, has lost his documents and his money, and in order to finance his vacation without a putevka, he sells his services to legitimate spa patients who are about to be thrown out of the sanatorium because they have neglected their prescribed treatments. For five rubles each, he will take the treatments in their stead. We see the portly official being blasted by a power hose, operating a rowing machine, and riding a stationary bicycle. The completed treatments are then duly noted in the medical booklets that he returns to their rightful owners in exchange for cash, enabling him to buy provisions for a seductive rendezvous in his tiny rented room. The prized Soviet health vacation had become an object of desire but not for its medical component.

The provision of luxury accommodations—sculpture, fine carpets, and second helpings in the dining room—had led to a reduction in the number of available beds in Soviet health resorts, and the putevka became increasingly difficult to obtain, even for those with connections. But while official health institutions faced cutbacks and received fewer patients with putevki, the number of vacationers without putevki exploded. North of Sochi, the local resorts on the Black Sea shore took in increasing numbers of so-called unorganized patients, even whole families. The beach town of Anapa served 63,000 of these vacationers in 1938, including 17,500 children. Only 10 to 25 percent of visitors even sought to take a course of treatment as outpatients. And as at the Teberda mountain resort high in the Caucasus, even ambulatory patients remained outside the health agencies' watchful gaze: they might purchase a putevka for outpatient treatment, but they lived in hotels or private homes, making monitoring of medical services difficult. In 1939 scenic Teberda received almost as many tourists as medical patients, its function as a health spa diluted almost beyond recognition.<sup>95</sup> This overflow and the entire phenomenon of "unorganized" vacationers suggest a surprising degree of mobility for Soviet citizens in the 1930s.

The Soviet health spa vacation had been created to produce medical results. Vacation travel to spas and rest homes served the state's interest in promoting a healthy population and reinforced the regime's commitment to public health and to prophylactic medicine. For the individuals who received this medicalized leisure travel, the appeal of the vacation transcended medicine and good health: it produced as much pleasure as healing, and the medical foundation of the spa vacation became subordinated to entertainment and fun, in visual propaganda as well as in reality. By the mid-1930s, the spa vacation had become a prized commodity, valued perhaps for its medical properties but just as much for its opportunity to travel elsewhere and for the distinction that this travel conferred on the individual. Like many other

95. GARF, f. A-483, op. 2, d. 41, ll. 232, 251, 163–174.

areas of the Soviet economy, the provision of spa vacations remained woefully underfunded, and the demand for this experience always exceeded the state's ability to provide it. This scarcity further enhanced the desirability of a vacation in one of the country's health establishments.

This kind of vacation had been packaged and promoted as a uniquely socialist welfare entitlement for every Soviet citizen. In practice, because of scarcity, agencies disagreed about the appropriate client population. The trade unions sought to give priority to industrial workers, but as we have seen, trade union officials lost the battle to privilege workers. Health commissariat officials sought to give priority to those citizens who were most medically needy, regardless of social position. They too lost their battle to improve the nation's health through the spa vacation. The winners in the vacation sweepstakes were officials, artists, professors, and the military elite, who had become the new Soviet beau monde of the health resort in the course of the 1930s, relaxing at the best spas and at the most coveted times of the year. But the legacy of rational, rationed leisure was deeply embedded in the Soviet system, and as we will see, the purposeful medical side of the Soviet vacation would regain its authority in the aftermath of the devastating world war that produced so many victims and so much medical need. The struggle to balance purpose and pleasure would resume after the war. In addition, postwar officials would reconsider the proper relationship of the health resort system to the tourist movement. Tourism as a phenomenon had arisen in the 1920s as a vacation alternative to the kurorts and rest homes. We turn now to this second element of health-making Soviet leisure travel.

## chapter two

# Proletarian Tourism

## The Best Form of Rest

The classic Soviet vacation that took form by the end of the 1930s combined rest, recuperation, and medical attention. Modeled on the nineteenth-century Western practice of the leisure spa, the Soviet *ku-rort* demonstrated the superiority of socialism by providing access to this healing annual rest to the previously disenfranchised proletariat, at least in principle. Western practice had also produced the exemplary modern tourist, the self-actualizing individual who found satisfaction in encountering new places, landscapes, people, and adventure. In the Soviet Union, tourism as a distinctive type of vacation emerged separately from the spa-centered vacation, but it shared with all Soviet leisure travel an emphasis on utility and purpose. For the partisans of a Soviet tourist vacation, this was the best form of rest because it engaged the vacationer actively in the encounter with nature, people, and knowledge. These partisans pursued an active struggle in the 1920s and 1930s to popularize and expand this most authentic form of Soviet vacation, proletarian tourism.

The term “tourist” possessed two distinct meanings in the early Soviet Union. A tourist could be anyone who traveled to see sights, following a leisure-travel program of visual, cultural, and material consumption. But Soviet tourism activists in the 1920s and the early 1930s insisted that a proper tourist (*turist*) could be only that traveler who embarked on a purposeful journey, a circuit (tour) using one’s own physical locomotion. Purpose and rigor would distinguish *proletarian* tourism from its pleasure-seeking bourgeois counterpart. But many Soviet vacationers preferred a softer, more relaxed opportunity to travel, recognizing that they could expand their horizons and return home invigorated for a new year of work or study whether on foot or in a tourist bus.<sup>1</sup>

These two understandings of Soviet tourism, rugged and soft, would translate into two sets of tasks. Proletarian tourism as a social movement would invite broad masses of workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals to be-

1. G. Bergman, *Pervaia kniga turista* (Moscow, 1927), 11; Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), f. M-1, op. 4 (Komsomol secretariat), d. 29 (“On Tourism,” 25 May 1927), ll. 113–117.

come purposeful tourism activists, to develop tourist skills, and to choose the rigors of the road for their annual vacations from work. Providing for a broad range of tourism opportunities, however, required an economic outlook that could finance and build networks of facilities and transport to serve all who wished to spend their vacations in self-improving travel.

Focusing on tourism as a nascent industry, this chapter explores the unresolved balancing act between the two aspects of tourism: as a social movement and as an economic enterprise. In the course of the 1930s, we can observe a shift in tourism, parallel to that in health spa vacations, from a strictly utilitarian and ideologically purposeful activity to an experience that combined duty with delight. As the Soviet tourist vacation became more pleasurable, it became more attractive to the emerging Soviet middle class that possessed the social, political, and economic capital to acquire it. But Soviet tourism in the 1930s, whether rigorously proletarian or comfortably quasi-bourgeois, never achieved the mass proportions envisioned by the founders of the movement. The poverty of its infrastructure would limit the level of comfort that a Soviet vacation on the road could provide. This early history reveals a landscape of rival agencies, each competing to represent the best interests of domestic tourists, a picture of economic pluralism at odds with the image of a centrally planned and one-party state. Beneath the veneer of the monolithic Soviet system lay a chaotic mix of good intentions, inadequate resources, bureaucratic infighting, economic competition, and genuine uncertainty about the proper way to build the socialist utopia.

### The Origins of Proletarian Tourism

Tourism had developed an enthusiastic following among the Russian middle classes before the revolution. Emerging in the late nineteenth century, the Russian Society of Tourists (Rossiiskoe Obshchestvo Turistov) united groups of hikers, alpinists, and cyclists, all partisans of active touring. The society continued into the Soviet period but now faced competition from many competing authorities who each sought to promote tourism. Local governments organized municipal excursion bureaus to facilitate travel and outings. The Russian Republic's Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) established programs to train excursion leaders and constructed facilities for visitors to Petrograd and Moscow. Starting in 1923, the commissariat's Bureau of Long-Distance Excursions organized tourist travel to Crimean and Caucasus destinations, along the Volga, to the far north, the Urals, and beyond.<sup>2</sup>

In late 1926 the Communist youth organization Komsomol adopted tourism as its own cause. In the midst of anxious reporting about deviant and aim-

2. McReynolds, *Russia at Play*, chap. 5; S. Tarskii, "Rabochie i krest'ianskie ekskursii i turizm," *Vsemirnyi turist*, no. 1 (1929): 23; GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2068 (correspondence, July 1929), l. 18; G. P. Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii i SSSR* (Rostov-on-Don, 1988), 68–72.

less youth, epitomized in the trial of several dozen young Leningrad workers for a notorious gang rape in Chubarov Alley, the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda* called for a new form of leisure travel, Soviet mass tourism: "What is tourism? It is travel . . . you see what you have never seen before, and this opens your eyes, you learn, you grow. . . . And then you go back to the city, to work, to struggle, but the time has not passed in vain: you have become stronger and richer. This is tourism."<sup>3</sup> The Komsomol Central Committee devoted minimal attention to the project, but its small coterie of tourism enthusiasts worked to propagate the idea of proletarian tourism through newspaper articles and handbooks. Trade union organizations only reluctantly jumped on the tourism bandwagon. One union official believed that a society for mass tourism would appeal only to the bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, citing the fact that in 1926 even among trade union members traveling on Narkompros tours, only 17 percent were "workers."<sup>4</sup>

As isolated groups of young tourists began to journey on their own, seeking state assistance, the Komsomol proposed creating a bureau of tourism and excursions to promote their travel. Despite its concern that this movement might be exploited by "reactionary groups of the old intelligentsia," the Komsomol Central Committee nonetheless decided in June 1927 that this movement was still too weak to justify creating an independent mass tourism society. Local activists took matters into their own hands. *Komsomol'skaia pravda* had already published regular reports on how to be a tourist throughout 1927. Building on this momentum, a Komsomol group centered in Moscow decided to take over the prerevolutionary Russian Society of Tourists by flooding its ranks with new, progressive members. When the society held a general meeting in December 1927, the activists had enrolled enough new members to vote the old board of directors out of office. The Komsomol center now dropped its plans to organize a separate voluntary tourism society and agreed that the newly democratized Russian Society of Tourists could become the basis of mass tourism in the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

Student and worker youth provided the core of the new society. From cells within educational institutions and industrial enterprises came the society's mainstay—small independent groups of tourists who embarked on trips through mountain and river landscapes. The largest number of members (twelve thousand by one estimate) resided in Moscow, and in January 1929 its conference decided to change the organization's name to the Society for

3. *KP*, 16 December 1926. See Anne E. Gorsuch, *Youth in Revolutionary Russia: Enthusiasts, Bohemians, Delinquents* (Bloomington, IN, 2000), 170–176. The Chubarov Alley trial began on 16 December 1926.

4. RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 4, d. 29 (Komsomol secretariat, 1927), ll. 97, 113–118, 126–132; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 182; this handbook was issued by the Komsomol publishing house. See Koenker, *Republic of Labor*, 280–283, on the echoes of the movement in the trade union press.

5. RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 4, d. 29, ll. 97, 115–118, 126; *KP*, 10 December 1927; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 4 (1932): 8–9; RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 3, d. 44 (Komsomol bureau, 1928), l. 3; f. M-1, op. 4, d. 34 (Komsomol secretariat, 1928), ll. 203, 207.

Proletarian Tourism of the Russian Federation of Soviet Socialist Republics (Obshchestvo proletarskogo turizma RSFSR). “Russian Federation” better conveyed the expanse of national destinations than “Russia,” explained the group’s leaders, and although its ranks were open to everyone, the promotion of proletarian culture constituted its guiding principle. Regional sections soon appeared in the Soviet Far East, in Azerbaijan, and in the North Caucasus. In Moscow, the Bauman district organization became especially active, with 1,660 members by 1929. In 1929 the society began to publish a popular journal, *Na sushe i na more (On Land and On Sea)*, dedicated to “travel, adventures, local study, tourism, science fiction, invention, and discovery.” Quickly moving beyond simply agitating for mass tourism, the Society for Proletarian Tourism opened its own shop in Moscow, which sold domestic and imported tourist equipment, and it began to develop bases for tourists’ overnight stays along the most popular routes in Crimea, the Caucasus, and elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

The first years of the first five-year plan, from 1928 to 1931, coincided with a well-known class-based assault on institutions and values deemed bourgeois: outmoded, lacking vigor (“vegetarian”), and potentially counterrevolutionary. In literature and music, groups labeled themselves “proletarian” in order to seize control of the ideological ramparts and to obtain a greater share of state resources to support their art. Critics and scholars have disputed what characteristics in fact distinguished proletarian music or proletarian literature from modern, European, or bourgeois art forms, and the meaning of proletarian tourism was similarly ambiguous.<sup>7</sup> Combining patriotic nation-building efforts with the development of the self-actualizing individual, the desire to travel and encounter new people and places constituted a natural trait of humankind, argued tourism activists, who emphasized the purposeful value of tourism for the country’s citizens. Publications and programmatic statements in the late 1920s and early 1930s emphasized several attributes of specifically proletarian tourism in the USSR, but the boundaries between “humanistic” and “proletarian” remained fuzzy.

6. Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma*, 73–77; *Na sushe i na more* (hereinafter NSNM), no. 3 (1929): 10; *Proletarskii turizm (Iz opyta raboty baumanskogo otdeleniia obshchestva proletarskogo turizma)*. *Materialy k X baumanskoi raikonferentsii VLKSM* (Moscow, 1929), 6; NSNM, no. 3 (1929): 1. A more specialized monthly publication, *Turist-aktivist*, made its first appearance in August 1929 as the *Bulletin of the Central Council of the Society for Proletarian Tourism*; KP, 15 September 1928 (the Tourist store was located at the corner of Kuznetskii Most and Petrovka, the heart of the city’s fashionable shopping district); KP, 1 May 1929; 28 July 1928; GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 1826 (Russian Society of Tourists, December 1928–January 1929), ll. 16–17.

7. Edward J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Soviet Literature, 1928–32* (New York, 1953); Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931* (Bloomington, IN, 1978); Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford, 1988); Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (University Park, PA, 2004); Michael Gorham, *Speaking in Soviet Tongues: Language Culture and the Politics of Voice in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb, IL, 2003).



Activists emphasized the knowledge-building function of tourism, its role in raising the cultural level of urban and rural populations, and its potential to produce useful knowledge. "Tourism is a path to knowledge," the *Komsomol's* first directive had declared. Tourism piqued the traveler's curiosity, setting in motion a lifelong thirst for knowledge. Having learned how to look and how to see, tourists could apply these methodologies in all their intellectual endeavors. Tourism complemented formal schooling and book learning by providing concrete lessons in natural science, geography, economy, and history.<sup>8</sup>

Knowledge of country led to a heightened sense of patriotism. By directly encountering one's country, tourists became conscious of its vastness, its natural riches, and the variety of its peoples. "This *diverse* gigantic country offers the traveler continual and inexhaustible *novelty*, as compared with the celebrated land of Switzerland, which has only mountains, lakes, and a fine dairy industry, where one could count its attractions on the fingers of one hand," wrote *Komsomol'skaia pravda*.<sup>9</sup> From the beginning, this nation-building project emphasized the importance of relations among the "hundreds of peoples and tribes" of the Soviet Union. The urban tourist must learn to respect local customs and indigenous culture. Tourism also possessed critical military significance, a theme that would be emphasized throughout the 1930s. Learning to read maps and to navigate through unfamiliar space developed military skills; tourists gained familiarity with the mountainous border regions of the Soviet Union through travel, and they would be better prepared to defend those borders if war should come. Fostering the love of one's country would encourage the tourist to defend it if the need arose.<sup>10</sup>

In strengthening the body of the Soviet citizen, a tourist vacation paralleled the purposeful Soviet spa vacation: it restored health, toned the organism, and ensured that the traveler would return to work healthy, invigorated, and ready to apply new energy to the job. In this respect, tourism could be considered a part of the physical culture movement getting under way in the 1920s. In its healthful attributes, tourism would appeal particularly to young men and women, but it was also an appropriate vacation choice for any adult whose natural energy would suffocate in a rest home or sanatorium. Fresh air, clean water, sun, and physical exercise stimulated the appetite and

8. *KP*, 16 December 1926; 15 June 1927; *Fizkul'tura i sport*, 5 May 1928, 3; RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 4, d. 29, l. 113 (directive 20 May 1927); Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 53–56; L. Barkhash, *Sputnik turista* (Moscow, 1927), 8; *NSNM*, no. 1 (1930): 1.

9. *KP*, 16 December 1926 (emphasis in original). Also Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 24–25. That was then. On my 2011 visit to the Swiss capital Bern, the old city was awash in Russian-speaking tour groups.

10. *KP*, 15 June 1927; *NSNM*, no. 3 (1929); *NSNM*, no. 1 (1930): 1–2; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 22–24, 26; I. Egorov, "Zadachi 'Sovetskogo turista.'" *Ekskursant i turist. Sbornik po ekskursionnomu delu i turizmu* (Moscow, 1929), 3–4; *Fizkul'tura i sport*, 5 May 1928, 4; RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 4, d. 29, l. 113; *NSNM*, no. 15 (1930): 2; *NSNM*, no. 3 (1930): 2–5.



calmed the nerves. Healthy hygienic habits could also carry over throughout the year, making tourism an entirely appropriate school of healthy living.<sup>11</sup>

Creating knowledge, building the state, and improving one's physical health contributed to the good of the collective. In addition, activists explicitly extolled the virtues of proletarian tourism in constructing a Soviet self: the tourist experience promoted individual initiative, self-confidence, and self-discipline. One of its key principles, *samodeiatel'nost'*—a term literally defined as self-activism—connoted autonomy and independence.<sup>12</sup> Encountering the unknown, to “see what has never been seen before,” taught the tourist self-reliance: “you overcome obstacles, and sometimes danger—which strengthens the body and steels the will.” Planning one's own itinerary allowed the tourist to be an actor, a skilled traveler, not a passive participant on well-trodden routes. He or she would learn to plan and to develop the resources and resiliency to adapt to changing circumstances. “Self-organization and self-activism are the basis of tourism,” instructed the Komsomol in 1927.<sup>13</sup>

Studies of Soviet subjectivity emphasize the quality of a distinctly Soviet self oriented toward and subordinated to the collective.<sup>14</sup> In similar fashion, Soviet tourism activists promoted the ways in which travel developed feelings of comradeship and taught the techniques of mutual aid. Soviet tourism developed the capacity for *teamwork*. “You cannot travel without mutual support, especially where the route is most difficult and dangerous.” Sharing the work, dangers, and awe in the beauty of nature produced a common experience that cemented collective loyalties. Activists described in meticulous detail the mechanism for forming a tourist group and the division of labor within this collective. But these prescriptions did not necessarily imply that the individual was to be subsumed in the collective. Tourists should form groups that were small, compatible, and selective, based on personal affinities: members should share common skill levels, work experience, and social position. Over and over, handbooks stressed small, compatible, and essentially closed and *private* teams.<sup>15</sup> Some scholars ascribe to the Soviet sys-

11. *Fizkul'tura i sport*, 5 May 1928, 4; Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 7, 42, 9–10, 21–22; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 11; Barkhash, *Sputnik turista*, 8, 29–43; V. Antonov-Saratovskii, “Turizm i fizkul'tura,” *NSNM*, no. 5 (1930): 1.

12. The term also is used to denote amateur artistic activities, as in “evenings of amateur creativity,” which were a staple of cultural activity in kurorts, rest homes, and also on the tourist trail.

13. “See what has never been seen,” *KP*, 16 December 1926; 15 June 1927; Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 56–57; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 16–17; “Self-organization and self-activism,” *RGASPI*, f. M-1, op. 4, d. 29, l. 114.

14. Kharkhordin, *Collective and the Individual*; David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, NY, 2003); Igal Halpin, *Terror in My Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial* (Cambridge, MA, 2003); Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

15. *KP*, 16 December 1926 (quote); 15 June 1927; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 34.

tem an illiberal subjectivity, in which the development of selfhood was valued only for its ability to contribute to the collective.<sup>16</sup> Such values emerged especially clearly in relationship to work culture, but tourism activists celebrated the autonomy of the individual and saw in socialist tourism an ideal playground on which to develop this autonomy. In this way, Soviet tourism resembled organizations in the capitalist West, such as the Girl Scouts, that used individual self-actualization to promote patriotism and citizenship.

Universal access most markedly distinguished proletarian tourism from comparable practices in the capitalist world. In the West, reminded activists, only the wealthy could take any kind of vacation, including a tourist trip. The socialist state would subsidize its tourists, especially those with the fewest resources for travel. To allow ordinary workers the opportunity to become tourists, the Society for Proletarian Tourism negotiated with transportation agencies for discounted railway tickets. Once at a destination, the proletarian tourist would be able to savor the “chief pleasure of tourism,” propelling himself or herself through nature on foot, by boat, or by bicycle: self-locomotion was not only a superior way to encounter nature but also the most economical. Socialist industry would produce the necessary equipment for self-contained travel: rucksacks, tents, and hiking poles. The socialist state would also construct inexpensive tourist shelters in underpopulated areas; elsewhere tourists could find affordable and knowledge-producing lodging with members of the local population.<sup>17</sup>

Proletarian tourists, unlike their bourgeois counterparts, traveled not only for self-gratification but to help others. Traveling among nonurban populations, they would give back to the nation by performing good deeds along the way. An early manifesto insisted, “It’s all very well to be someplace else, to see, to appreciate, and to rest—this is nice and even appealing, but one mustn’t forget that in our country are many remote places, many backward nationalities, and we tourists, coming to places far away from the center, cut off by mountains and space, where the people are still very backward and uncultured—we ought to help them.” As missionaries from the culturally advanced cities, tourists did not just journey through nature but also brought books to peasants, repaired their farming equipment, organized child care centers, built radio transmitters, and taught them how to cut their hair.<sup>18</sup> As with health spas and rest homes, this symbiotic conjoining of pleasure and purpose would mark the distinctive quality of proletarian tourism in the Soviet Union.

16. Anna Krylova, “The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies,” *Kritika*, n.s. 1, no. 1 (2000): 119–146; Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*; Beer, *Renovating Russia*, 13–17.

17. *NSNM*, no. 1 (1930): 18–19; V. Antonov-Saratovskii, *Besedy o turizme* (Moscow, 1933), 3–5; Bergman, *Pervaiia kniga*, 16 (quote), 192.

18. *Proletarskii turizm*, 47 (quote), 51, 73–74; *NSNM*, no. 1 (1929): 12; *Biulleten’ Tsentral’nogo Soveta Obshchestva Proletarskogo Turizma*, no. 1 (1929): 15; *NSNM*, no. 1 (1930): 1–2, 15–17.

### Who Speaks for Tourism? The Bureaucratic Battle for the Franchise

While the Society for Proletarian Tourism developed its identity as a sponsor of low-cost, widely accessible small-group travel, the Commissariat of Enlightenment, already involved in the tourist business, decided it too should address the cultural revolution and the growing awareness of tourism's social benefits. In reaction to the Komsomol tourism campaign, the Commissariat of Enlightenment in 1927 created its own joint stock company, *Sovetskii Turist*, to organize excursions with educational character and to promote "the most rational rest of toilers."<sup>19</sup> It claimed the right to establish itineraries inside and outside Russia, to organize transportation and tourist bases, and to service both group and individual tourism, foreign and domestic. Shareholders in *Sovetskii Turist* (known by its short form, *Sovtur*) included various state agencies, of which the Commissariat of Health was a major player, pledging to turn over to *Sovtur* some of its properties in the Mineral Waters resort for conversion to tourist bases. The potentially lucrative foreign market attracted not only the Commissariat of Enlightenment and its business offshoot *Sovtur*. Various transportation agencies also competed to serve foreign tourists in the 1920s, and in April 1929 a second joint stock company was formed, this one devoted to foreign tourism: the company for *Inostrannyi Turizm*, or *Inturist*.<sup>20</sup> Thus by early 1929, at the start of the first five-year plan for industry, three organizations were competing for state resources to provide domestic and international tourism opportunities: the Society for Proletarian Tourism, *Sovetskii Turist*, and *Inturist*.

*Sovetskii Turist* took seriously its "Soviet" label. As its chairman I. Egorov explained in a 1929 article, "excursions and tourism without a goal should not exist in the Soviet land." Soviet tourists sought to strengthen their health and marvel at the beauties of nature, but all tourists wished also to learn more about the conditions and life of the many peoples with whom they shared this country. The money these tourists spent could provide needed capital for the local regions through which they traveled (a development strategy that remains canonical to this day everywhere in the world). *Sovtur*'s most famous route, along the Georgian Military Highway from Vladikavkaz to the Georgian capital Tbilisi, emphasized all the qualities of purposeful, knowledge-building, and nation-building socialist travel. Tourists on this itinerary number 15 would encounter the complex ethnic makeup of the region, learn about its cultural and economic life, and thrill to awe-inspiring views of snow-covered peaks, alpine

19. *KP*, 29 November 1927, discusses the role of the People's Commissariat of Trade (Narkomtorg) and other agencies in this endeavor. The firm was officially chartered on 10 October 1928.

20. GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2070 (*Sovetskii Turist* correspondence, March 1929–February 1930), ll. 11, 11ob., 7. On *Inturist*, see Matthias Heeke, *Reisen zu den Sowjets: Der ausländische Tourismus in Russland 1921–1941* (Münster, Ger., 2003), 31–50; and Shawn Connelly Salmon, "To the Land of the Future: a History of *Intourist* and Travel to the Soviet Union, 1929–1991" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2008).

flora, and mountain villages. Much of this route (“the most beautiful highway in the world,” as recounted in Il’f and Petrov’s *The Twelve Chairs*) could be traversed by horse-drawn or motorized buses, stopping along the way at Sovtur bases. A more rugged itinerary (number 19) took hardy tourists along the Sukhumi Military Highway through vast unpopulated stretches of the Caucasus range. Setting out from Kislovodsk, tourists would travel by bus to the mountain resort of Teberda. From there they crossed the Caucasus on foot, spending their nights in tents, surrounded only by “wild nature, glaciers, peaks, and mountain lakes,” finishing the journey at sea level at the Sovtur base near Sukhumi.<sup>21</sup> This twenty-one-day group tour not only exposed tourists to the variety of the Soviet national space but toughened them and taught them how to cope in unfamiliar conditions. For 1930, Sovtur developed a series of industrial excursions tailored for groups from particular industries: cotton workers or metallurgists would visit similar plants and expand their knowledge of production processes. All Soviet tourists would learn about Soviet economic achievements by visiting the great construction sites of the five-year plan. Sovtur emphasized the benefits of collective touring, promising to assign individual tourists to appropriate and compatible groups. For Sovtur as well as the Society for Proletarian Tourism, participation in group excursions (whose members, divided by sex, would share large sleeping rooms at tourist bases) would help to develop habits of comradeship and solidarity.<sup>22</sup> Soviet tourism also needed to be accessible to growing numbers of aspiring travelers, so Sovtur priced its trips according to the income of the traveler, and like its rival proletarian tourism society, arranged with the Commissariat of Transportation to offer half-price train tickets on its packaged excursions. In this way, the company sought to democratize Soviet tourism, to appeal to travelers from all social strata, from poor peasants (they claimed) to teachers (Narkompros’s original clientele), engineers, and government officials. Its ethos differed from that of the Komsomol-inspired Society for Proletarian Tourism only in the absence of good deeds as part of its mission, a point that the proletarian tourists would seize upon and label “sovturism”—apoliticalness.

At the same time, Sovtur recognized its responsibility to maintain a balanced budget. Tourists wanted decent accommodations, good healthy food, medical help, transportation, guides, and guidebooks. All of this cost money, which Sovtur proposed to raise by charging higher prices for tourists able to pay, renting out off-season spaces in its tourist bases for use as rest homes, securing a monopoly on tourist excursions in Crimea, selling postcards, and expanding its bases in Moscow and Leningrad to serve as profit centers.<sup>23</sup>

21. Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1929 goda* (Moscow, 1929), 61–63; Il’ia Il’f and Evgenii Petrov, *Twelve Chairs*, trans. John H.C. Richardson (Evanston, IL, 1997), 364.

22. Egorov, “Zadachi ‘Sovetskogo turista,’” 4–5; *Marshruty proizvodstvennykh ekskursii po SSSR na 1930 god. Spravochnik* (Moscow, 1930); Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii po SSSR na leto 1930 goda. Spravochnik* (Moscow, 1930), 191.

23. Egorov, “Zadachi ‘Sovetskogo turista,’” 7; *KP*, 11 January 1929; GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2068, l. 17.

From the outset, proletarian tourism activists saw in Sovtur a competitor, not a partner in promoting working-class tourism. Both organizations emphasized that they embraced socialist principles of purposeful travel, and both endeavored to spread tourism to new groups and strata. Both engaged in commercial activities: Sovtur renting beds in tourist bases and selling postcards, the Society for Proletarian Tourism producing and selling tourist equipment. The issue of discounted train tickets aroused fierce complaint in the pages of *Komsomol'skaia pravda*. Sovtur insisted on the sole right to distribute these half-fare coupons received from the transportation commissariat, and it reserved them for participants on its planned excursions, denying the small independent groups organized under the aegis of the proletarian tourism society the opportunity to travel cheaply to their tourism destinations. In this, claimed the proletarian tourists, Sovtur favored the well-to-do strata of Soviet society. Workers could not afford the high prices of the planned excursions, with or without transport subsidies. Even with prices adjusted for income, only 7 percent of participants in Sovtur-planned excursions in 1928 were classified as workers, while 60 percent were educators, and 22 percent white-collar employees. Fighting to defend its turf, Sovtur sought to block the ratification of the Society for Proletarian Tourism's charter and then tried to limit its competitor's jurisdiction exclusively to propaganda for independent touring. Proletarian tourism should be a social movement, it proposed, charged with developing mass individual tourism through cells of enthusiasts. Sovtur demanded monopoly status as the state-funded tourist agency. But when it announced its plan to serve eighty-one thousand tourists in 1929—of whom forty-seven thousand would travel in independent groups—and then moved to organize its own factory-based cells, the hallmark of the Society for Proletarian Tourism, the proletarian tourists declared war.<sup>24</sup>

Narkompros worked out a temporary truce between the two organizations in 1929, encouraging Sovtur to share its discounted train tickets and to allow proletarian tourism members to rent space in its bases during their independent trips. Meanwhile, the trade unions, whose members furnished the tourists, grew weary of the bickering between the two groups and urged them to work out their differences. In late 1929, a high-level conference resolved that the two organizations should combine forces as one, and in February 1930, representatives from both sides met to work out the terms of their consolidation.<sup>25</sup> Still at stake was the soul of Soviet tourism: would it take on the socialist, voluntary form of the Society for Proletarian Tourism or the more commercial, business-like functions of Sovetskii Turist?

24. *KP*, 11 January 1929; 26 January 1929; 6 April 1929; GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 1826, ll. 27–40; *Biulleten' Tsentral'nogo Soveta Obshchestva Proletarskogo Turizma*, no. 1 (1929): 11–14.

25. GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 1826, ll. 18–19; d. 2068, ll. 22, 19–20; *KP*, 12 December 1929; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 7 (1931).

As in other arenas of the cultural revolution of 1928–32, the players could not be distinguished on the basis of their class or even political positions. Tourism radicals rallied to Party organs like the Komsomol; state institutions like Sovtur's sponsoring Commissariat of Enlightenment emphasized their administrative credentials. The Moscow Communist Party paper, *Vecherniaia Moskva*, took a populist line that minimized the importance of ideology. The battle replicated the intensifying "Great Turn" over Soviet economic and political policy. By the winter of 1929–30, when all-out collectivization was raging in the countryside (and Sovtur asked for state funds to develop collective farm tourist bases!), the Society for Proletarian Tourism and the Soviet Tourist organization fought head-to-head for the tourism franchise in the USSR. The proletarian activists stressed their ideological superiority: "We were for a mass independent proletarian movement, Sovtur was for paid excursions. We were for cells in enterprises, as the basic center; Sovtur was for the center to be the excursion base. We were for subordinating business [*khoziaistvennye*] services to the political tasks of the movement, Sovtur in practice had raised business to an end in itself."<sup>26</sup>

In March 1930, while Stalin warned his cadres not to become dizzy with the success of their collectivization effort, the Council of People's Commissars, encouraged by the Komsomol Central Committee, awarded victory on the tourist front to the principle of class. Class war had ended, Stalin had implied, the proletarians had won, and peace should now be restored. The council ordered the state agency Sovtur to yield to the proletarian tourists, and a new entity took the stage: the All-Union Voluntary Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions (*Vsesoiuznoe dobrovol'noe obshchestvo proletarskogo turizma i ekskursii*—OPTE). In assuming the identity of a voluntary organization, Soviet tourism joined a proliferating array of such organizations, such as the Friends of Children, the Down with Illiteracy Society, and the League of the Militant Godless, all designed to mobilize segments of the population for the public good and to promote popular initiative.<sup>27</sup> Under its new form, the tourism organization would continue to administer and expand the existing network of excursion itineraries, bases, and transportation arrangements. It would also use its propaganda resources and local organizations to make proletarian tourism a truly mass movement, hoping to introduce tens of millions of Soviet toilers to the pleasures of the tourist vacation.

26. *Turist-aktivist*, no. 4 (1932): 10. Collective farm tourism in GARF, f. A-2306, op. 29, d. 2070, l. 32.

27. There is an extensive literature on these organizations. Joseph Bradley has explored the imperial-era voluntary organizations in *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge, MA, 2009). For the Soviet period, see among others, A.P. Kupaigorodskaia, ed., *Dobrovol'nye obshchestva v Petrograde-Leningrade v 1917–1937 gg.* (Leningrad, 1989); William E. Odom, *The Soviet Volunteers: Modernization and Bureaucracy in a Public Mass Organization* (Princeton, NJ, 1973); Daniel Peris, *Storming the Heavens: The Soviet League of the Militant Godless* (Ithaca, NY, 1998); Charles E. Clark, *Uprooting Otherness: The Literacy Campaign in NEP-Era Russia* (Cranbury, NJ, 2000).



### The Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions: Mass Movement without Masses

The creation of the new OPTE represented a triumph for the principles of voluntarism, federalism, mass participation, and self-actualization. Member cells located in factories and educational institutions constituted the fundamental core of the society: here tourism activists could work closely with trade union, Komsomol, and physical culture organizers, drawing on their authority and resources. Factory cells in particular would use the romance of long-distance travel to attract new working-class members, who would seek out the OPTE in order to travel cheaply during their summer vacations, since only registered groups could receive half-price train tickets. (In some cases, the local factory organization would pay the other half.) After the first trip, many of these tourists became hooked, and they used reports about their adventures at evening slide shows, in factory newspapers, and by word of mouth to inspire others to join the movement. The cell at the Moselektrik plant in Moscow declared itself to be the oldest in the society, having originated in 1926 with 12 people. By 1930, the cell counted 260 members, 106 of whom were traveling that summer to Karelia, along the Dnepr River, or to the Black Sea and Crimea. The cell at the Mytishchi wagon-building plant launched its tourism work with a journey along the Georgian Military Highway in 1930; by the end of that summer, it had recruited 300 members.<sup>28</sup> In theory, such cells would federate into regional councils, and the entire structure would be supervised by a central council elected at periodic national congresses. But local initiative and proletarianness remained key principles.

The essence of the new voluntary society for tourism and the justification for its victory over Sovtur lay in its goal to make tourism accessible to the masses. Only if the movement were genuinely proletarian in composition as well as in spirit would the promises of socialist tourism be fulfilled. "The class composition of the society determines the quality of our work, the level of its ideological saturation—this determines the very face of proletarian tourism, and our most immediate task is to obtain the predominance of proletarians as the basic mass of members of the society," wrote an activist in 1930.<sup>29</sup> Mass membership also would ensure the financial viability of the society, which depended on member dues to pay for staff, instructors, and consultants. If Sovtur had deviated too far in the direction of commerce, relying on the state for investment funds and earning its revenues through high prices for its tourist trips, the OPTE would be proletarian in its business plan, relying on the volunteer activism of local cells and on the accumulated dues from millions of members to finance the expansion of tourism.

28. *Turist-aktivist*, no. 6 (1930): 20; *NSNM*, no. 7 (1930), inside front cover. Reports from local cells appeared regularly in *NSNM* and *Turist-aktivist*: for example, *NSNM*, no. 5 (1930): 18–19; *NSNM*, no. 7 (1930), inside front cover; *Biulleten' turista*, no. 6 (1930): 18–20; *Biulleten' turista*, nos. 7–8 (1930): 22–23; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 1 (1931): 22–23; *NSNM*, no. 12 (1931): 8–9; *NSNM*, no. 12 (1932): 6; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 4 (1932): 18; *NSNM*, no. 13 (1932): 12; *NSNM*, no. 15 (1933): 6–7, 9; *NSNM*, no. 11 (1934): 3–4; *NSNM*, no. 12 (1934): 13; *NSNM*, no. 8 (1935): 6; *Proletarskii turizm*, 34–49; *Biulleten' turista*, no. 7–8 (1930): 23.

29. *NSNM*, no. 9 (1930): 14.

Expanding the membership base became the most important priority for the new organization. It noted with pride that by 1929, the Society for Proletarian Tourism, the OPTE's predecessor, had already grown from a few hundred to 50,000 members, although actual *tourists* in 1929 already numbered some 300,000. Acknowledging that the worker membership of the society remained too low—42 percent in Moscow's Presnia district and Leningrad, 36 percent in Vladivostok—its leaders announced its plan to enroll 200,000 members in 1930.<sup>30</sup> In Leningrad, officials in July 1930 addressed the low figure of 9,318 members by ordering the important proletarian center to recruit 50,000 members by October 1. Through such methods, the organization reported 600,000 members by the end of 1931; unafraid to think boldly, the organization raised its membership goal to 1.5 million for 1932.<sup>31</sup> Not only would these recruitment efforts promote tourism locally, but members would now receive first priority for all OPTE excursions, including railway and steamship discounts, and only members could receive ration books, rations, and equipment loans for their independent small group trips. Still, most workers seemed reluctant to become proletarian tourists. They held on to notions of tourism as “idleness” and “mere amusement,” conceded one of the society's officials in 1932. A representative from the city of Kalinin (formerly Tver) admitted that workers did not take the movement seriously. “Here in Kalinin the word ‘tourist’ has the same force as the word ‘*shalopai*’ [good for nothing] and nobody utters it without laughing.”<sup>32</sup> For these workers, tourism remained a bourgeois pastime unsuitable for the builders of socialism.

Moreover, membership involved responsibilities beyond purposeful tourism. Many OPTE factory cells spent less time touring than carrying out various Communist Party campaigns, such as fighting absenteeism at work, supporting the spring sowing campaign, fulfilling the five-year plan, and studying Comrade Stalin's letter on Leninism. Why join the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions when membership in the League of the Militant Godless, the Society for Aid to Political Prisoners, or Friends of the Air Fleet brought the same opportunities (and obligations) for public activism? In fact, it became clear that many of the hundreds of thousands of OPTE members had little interest in the society but had been signed up by local organizers in order to pad the membership rolls, and very few of these members engaged in any tourism at all.<sup>33</sup>

30. Ibid.; source of the data unknown.

31. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 19 (OPTE provisional board meetings), l. 18; NSNM, nos. 32–33 (1931): 17; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 2 (1932): 2. Archival records report 716,700 members at the start of 1932 and 936,700 a year later. Eva Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin: Sowjetische Alpinisten, 1928–1953* (Zurich, 2010), 432.

32. NSNM, nos. 31–32 (1932): 2; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 2–3 (1933): 5.

33. *Turist-aktivist*, no. 2 (1931), 28; no. 8 (1931): 15–16; no. 9 (1931): 13; nos. 10–11 (1931): 22; no. 1 (1932): 7; no. 2 (1932): 20; nos. 2–3 (1933): 4–5; NSNM, no. 6 (1930): 1–3; no. 12 (1931): 8; no. 7 (1930), inside front cover; no. 12 (1932): 6; no. 13 (1932): 12; no. 15 (1933): 9. On the compulsory activism of voluntary society members, see Peris, *Storming the Heavens*, 157–158.



Undeterred by any membership gap, the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions developed plans to expand Soviet tourism along three fronts: package tours, individual trips, and local outings. Its excursion department would continue to operate package group tours along the several dozen long-distance itineraries acquired in the merger with Sovtur. This involved improving and expanding the tourist bases on these routes, supplying them with food and other necessities, and hiring guides to accompany the groups. But the small capacities of tourist bases limited the expansion of package tours. Consequently, the OPTE placed great emphasis on individualized group travel, the mainstay of the original Society for Proletarian Tourism. Individual factory cells would lead the effort to promote these kinds of trips and to prepare members to carry them out. Finally, the OPTE sought to recruit tourists to the cause by promoting “local tourism”—excursions to local attractions such as museums, parks, and enterprises and one-day outings that could teach tourist skills as well as provide recreation and escape from the everyday. The Leningrad organization, for example, announced it had sent 841,000 tourists on local trips in 1931.<sup>34</sup>

For most OPTE members, tourism meant long-distance travel. Although the society proved unable to monitor the extent of independent group tourism because too many groups failed to register their trips and communications between local cells and the central OPTE council remained weak, it boldly announced that it planned for 400,000 independent group tourists in 1931. A more realistic plan four years later called for the accommodation of 38,000 independent tourists in 1935.<sup>35</sup> Declarations about the scope of packaged group tours fluctuated just as wildly in the period, rendering it impossible to develop any reliable benchmarks for the actual consumption of tourist travel. According to one source, Sovtur planned to serve 17,390 tourists on packaged routes in 1929, another 16,700 on “mass trips” (generally trainloads of travelers sent to Moscow or Leningrad), and 47,180 individuals. Detailed figures for package trips in 1930 suggest modest growth: between 23,000 and 25,000 tourists traveled on the “all-union” itineraries sponsored now by OPTE: 9,250 to Crimea, 9,040 to the Caucasus (of whom 3,500 traveled the Georgian Military Highway), and 4,600 to Moscow and Leningrad. But in its publicity for the 1931 season, the OPTE contended that 50,000 tourists had traveled the planned routes in 1930 and that it expected to serve 350,000 travelers in 1932!<sup>36</sup> Retrospective data reported in 1937 reveal the fantasy these plans projected. In 1933, the OPTE hoped to serve 53,400 tourists on its all-union routes, but in the end, only 33,900 tourists actually traveled. The real surge in package tour travel took place in 1934 (perhaps as a result of the improving food supply situation in the country): 69,980 tourists traveled the all-union routes in 1934, 61,250 in 1935, and 83,680 in 1936.

34. *NSNM*, nos. 22–24 (1932): 4.

35. *NSNM*, no. 13 (1931): 3; *NSNM*, 1 (1935): 4.

36. GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 1826, ll. 30–32; *NSNM*, no. 4 (1931): 8; no. 10 (1931): 2–3.

These figures suggest a modest growth in organized tourism in the early 1930s, but they came nowhere near the aspiration for “massiveness” of the original OPTE. The flow of tourists was not trivial, and the number of tourists on all-union planned tours was comparable to the number receiving kurort vacations. In 1934, 47,154 resters received kurort putevki, compared with 69,980 tourists on the main routes. For 1935, the planned kurort traffic was 70,000 individuals, compared with 61,000 package tourists.<sup>37</sup>

The OPTE’s grandiose proclamations of success in fact drew critical attention from Communist Party organs. At the start of 1933, *On Land and On Sea* reported that nearly 7,000,000 people were now members. “No one now can say tourism is empty amusement.” But in fact, it was the society’s coffers that were empty. Paper members provided no revenue. In Ukraine, which listed 188,500 members in 1933, only 5 percent of these had paid their dues. Nowhere did more than one-third of reported members actually pay anything. The mass movement had failed to attract mass participation. When the Party’s control commission and worker-peasant inspectorate investigated OPTE in the summer of 1933, investigators scoffed at the society’s declaration of millions of members, tens of thousands of factory cells, 80,000 alpinists, and 100,000 cyclists: “There are no such figures in nature.” To the society’s promise that they would recruit as tourists half of the entire adult population of the Soviet Union, the investigators asked, “Is this not magnitogorstroimania?”—a reference to the inflated boasts concerning the construction of the Urals industrial center, Magnitogorsk. Chasing after naked numbers had led the society to blatant self-congratulation (*al-leluevshchina*), financial shortfalls, unrealistic planning, mismanagement, and embezzlement.<sup>38</sup>

Created in 1930 to combine the functions of tourist agency and mass movement, the OPTE did not adequately perform either of these tasks. The Komsomol, which had initiated the proletarian takeover of tourism in the 1920s, had transferred its enthusiasm and attention by 1930 to other activities, such as collectivization. Its press had practically ignored tourism by the start of 1931, and OPTE activists felt cut off and abandoned. Nor did the tourist movement enjoy much backing from the trade unions, the institutional bedrock of proletarian society. Local OPTE cells complained that they received no support, financial or otherwise, from factory organizations for their tourists. The OPTE center hoped that the central trade union organization would purchase tourist putevki and distribute them to enterprises in much the same way they allocated them to rest homes and sanatoria. But the unions were slow to salute, ignoring OPTE’s offer of forty thousand putevki for tourist trips in 1934. The unions planned to send one million workers to

37. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8 (TEU materials), l. 56; f. 9493, op. 1, d. 30 (putevki materials, 1935), ll. 19ob., 21.

38. “No one now can say,” *NSNM*, no. 1 (1933): 2; no. 12 (1933): 14; “There are no such figures,” no. 16 (1933): 4–5.

rest homes and sanatoria in 1934, complained OPTE officials, but only five thousand on tourist packages.<sup>39</sup>

In its failure to become a mass movement in the 1930s, Soviet tourism did not differ radically from practices in the developed world beyond its borders. Tourism and vacations elsewhere remained largely the prerogative of the elite and upper middle class; the true expansion of mass tourism did not take place until after the Second World War. In Europe, the labor movement's acquisition of paid vacations after 1936 only gradually led to an increase in leisure travel. Even with special discounts for worker train travel, only 5–10 percent of French people took vacations away from home in the mid-1930s, deterred by lack of money and the shortage of accommodations but also because of habit. Tourists in capitalist countries as well as the USSR needed to be taught how to travel. In the United States, the trade union movement had expressed little interest in paid vacations as a labor entitlement, focusing instead on shorter hours. Tourist vacations there appealed mostly to the middle class before the 1950s. In Great Britain, mass vacationing had become more widespread: one estimate suggests that by 1938 40 percent of adults took a one-week vacation. British holiday camps made their first appearance in the 1930s, offering working people a taste of luxury, but their real expansion would come after the war. Nazi Germany, with its *Strength through Joy* organization, came closest to achieving mass tourism in the interwar period. Not only did the group send more than a million tourists a year on its cruises and package tours, but a robust commercial tourist industry provided additional vacation opportunities to members of the German middle class.<sup>40</sup> In these countries, however, the development of mass tourism could build upon a partnership of growing demand, a state perception of public good, and a commercial tourist industry. The Soviet Union lacked the last of these three criteria, and tourism activists rejected the idea outright.

Underfunded and ill equipped to manage its growing network of tourist facilities, the OPTE lurched from crisis to crisis. Although created in 1930, the society did not convene its first (and last) congress until 1932. Here the delegates affirmed the ideological principles of proletarian tourism and agreed that independent tourism, not package tours, should be the movement's foundation. They also acknowledged the need to improve facilities and condi-

39. NSNM, no. 1 (1931): 2; no. 5 (1934): 5; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 5–6 (May–June 1932): 17; KP, 11 May 1934. The figure of one million must be taken with a grain of salt, since only forty-seven thousand citizens utilized health resorts in 1934.

40. Ellen Furlough, "Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France, 1930s to 1970s," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 2 (1998): 247–286; Gary Cross, "Vacations for All: The Leisure Question in the Era of the Popular Front," *Journal of Contemporary History* 24, no. 4 (October 1989): 599–621; Michael Berkowitz, "A 'New Deal' for Leisure: Making Mass Tourism during the Great Depression," in Baranowski and Furlough, *Being Elsewhere*, 185–212; Aron, *Working at Play*, 188–204; Christopher M. Kopper, "The Breakthrough of the Package Tour in Germany after 1945," *Journal of Tourism History* 1, no. 1 (March 2009): 67–92; Colin Ward and Dennis Hardy, *Goodnight Campers! The History of the British Holiday Camp* (London, 1986); Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*; Semmens, *Seeing Hitler's Germany*.



Member badge of the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions, 1930s. The round compass and the red star remained constants in the iconography of the society and its successors. Badge in author's possession.

tions for package tourists but criticized some units of the society for focusing too much on the commercial side of the “long ruble”: sovturism without Sovtur. In response to the Party Control Commission's reprimand for padded membership rolls and bad management in 1933, the society trimmed its apparatus from 186 paid employees to 104, reorganized its departments, and promised to be both better managers and better socialists. “Mercenary transactions, chasing after rubles by any method, sharply contradict the interests of the tourist movement and should be immediately terminated.” But it also needed to manage its assets—tourist bases, manufacturers of tourist clothing and equipment, and food supplies—more efficiently, with less red tape.<sup>41</sup>

41. *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 5–6 (1932): 3, 5; *NSNM*, nos. 8–9 (1933): 3 (quote); no. 8 (1934): 10–11.

By 1935 the trade union leadership had begun to take notice of a growing popular interest in tourism, and it criticized OPTE's inability to respond. "Tourism—is above all about *health*," editorialized the trade union's central newspaper, *Trud* (Labor). Surveys of factory workers in different cities produced the "surprising" result that shock workers wanted to spend their vacations to see as much of their country as possible, to travel on the Volga, to see where Lermontov had lived, to show their families their native Urals. And they expected their OPTE cells to make this possible. "This summer I've decided to put pressure on OPTE to organize a trip to the Caucasus," said one fitter at Moscow's Dinamo plant. "I want to look at the sea not in paintings, but in real life." Failing to respond, by the end of 1935 the voluntary society had become hopelessly compromised by its financial irregularities and inattention to its basic task of promoting tourism. In pursuit of profit, which had now become an end in itself, OPTE seaside tourist bases had been turned into pensions for "tourists" who spent their entire vacations in one place on the Black Sea shore, while real tourists wishing to travel from base to base were turned away.<sup>42</sup>

By early 1936, the Soviet Central Executive Committee had concluded that the voluntary society had failed in its mission to provide low-cost and healthful tourism to the Soviet masses. Given the prominence of the right to rest in the new constitution to be unveiled in June, government officials judged tourism too important to be left to an ill-supervised voluntary society. On 17 April 1936, the executive committee formally liquidated the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions. The Central Trade Union Council would take control of excursion work, mass tourism, and alpinism, including responsibility for all national and local itineraries (*marshruty*). The council would also acquire all the property that belonged to the OPTE: tourist bases and hotels, including the multistory House of Tourists then under construction on Moscow's Arbat Street. But the council would share responsibility for independent tourism and alpinism with the All-Union Council for Physical Culture, which was also assigned a leadership and supervisory role for tourism.<sup>43</sup>

Given the role of trade unions in administering the extensive system of rest homes and sanatoria, transferring to them the responsibility for tourist vacations made good sense. The prior existence in most enterprises of "voluntary sports societies" under the aegis of the committee on physical culture also would enable OPTE cells to find a new administrative home and local protector. This new decision preserved the notion of tourism as a movement, not a business. Tourism as the best vacation remained in the realm of ideology, welfare, benefits, and—as we shall see—perquisites, rather than as its own sphere of economic activity.

42. "Tourism," *Trud*, 26 March 1935 (emphasis in original); "This summer," 12 March 1935; 8 October 1935; *NSNM*, no. 8 (1934): 10. *KP*, 11 May 1934, reported that the reorganization of OPTE was being considered by "very authoritative organizations."

43. *NSNM*, no. 5 (1936): 4; *Trud*, 18 April 1936; *Pravda*, 18 April 1936.

## The Trade Unions Take Control

The transfer of tourism affairs to the trade unions and physical culture committees reinforced the principle of mobilization as the primary mechanism of Soviet socialist construction. Like the now-defunct OPTE, these groups existed in parallel to the state, designed to organize and serve members at their place of work. Unlike the OPTE, authorities believed, the trade unions' superior administrative apparatus and experience would allow them to avoid the pitfalls of bad management that had thwarted the expansion of Soviet tourism up until 1936. However, the new trade union tourism administration, the Tourism-Excursion Authority (*Turistsko-ekskursionnoe upravlenie*, TEU) faced the same challenge of the dual tourism mission that OPTE had confronted earlier. On the one hand, it took on the responsibility to promote and organize independent, small-group tourism as a form of "mass, cultured rest of the Soviet working person." In addition, however, its mission also included "acquainting the working people with the economy, geography, natural riches, the gigantic growth of the culture of peoples, and the population of the USSR"—in other words, expanding Soviet citizens' access to tourist travel and sightseeing as an alternative to the rest home or health spa vacation. This involved organizing all kinds of tourist travel and excursions, both independent and packaged; the construction and maintenance of tourist facilities; coordinating transportation; producing equipment; and conducting scientific research on tourism methodologies.<sup>44</sup> As with the OPTE, this dual mission pitted the tourism purists—independent travelers themselves who sought to mobilize millions of other independent travelers—against the managers, who concentrated their efforts on the material logistics of mass travel. To these managers, often scornfully labeled *kommersanty*, or "businessmen," fell the opprobrious legacy of Sovetskii Turist, along with all the attendant suspicions of an antiproletarian "commercial deviation."

Like the Soviet Union, the new Tourism-Excursion Authority was federal in structure. A central office in Moscow, headed initially by the very same official who had directed OPTE, set policy, allocated funds, and supervised a network of regional departments in whose territories were located the so-called all-union, or national, tourist itineraries.<sup>45</sup> These local departments bore the responsibility for staffing and supplying their bases, developing and publicizing new local itineraries, and balancing their budgets. They were also supposed to promote individual mass tourism in their regions, sending tourists as well as receiving them. This federal structure and regional division of labor would persist with minor permutations until the end of the USSR.

If the trade unions assumed responsibility for the business side of tourism, the physical culture committee became the ideological leader and organiz-

44. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 1–10b.

45. *Ibid.*, ll. 10, 33, 46.

er of proletarian tourism, promoting its healthful, purposeful, and rigorous agendas. The most avid proletarian tourist activists had always lauded independent tourism—especially mountaineering—as its purest, most sublime form. Alpinists such as Nikolai Krylenko and Lev Barkhash had helped to lead the proletarian tourism movement in 1927, and alpinism enjoyed a rarefied status as the most glamorous form of touring: new ascents of difficult peaks became newsworthy items. The sport attracted notable participants from across the social spectrum: the mathematician Boris Delone, an ardent mountain climber, would serve in the 1930s as one of the leaders of the new alpine section under the Central Committee on Physical Culture and Sport. The sixty-four-year-old “tireless tourist” Maria Preobrazhenskaia, a scientific worker and the first female Russian alpinist, also produced the first Soviet film on alpinism: she would climb the challenging Mount Kazbek eleven times before her death in 1932. The chairman of both the Society for Proletarian Tourism and its successor, OPTE, Krylenko, served simultaneously as the Russian Federation People’s Commissar of Justice. He had earned his tourism credentials as a notable mountain climber both in the Caucasus and in exploratory expeditions in the Pamir Mountains of Central Asia. Proletarian tourism extended the opportunity to test oneself in the mountains to “sons of the working class,” who went to the mountains not for the bourgeois purpose of escaping from life but to “strengthen their will, learn how to subordinate their interests to that of the collective, and gather new strength and impressions.” By 1938 alpinism had become the most “fashionable” form of tourist activity, and factory organizations and sports clubs increasingly sponsored their own alpine training camps. That year, twenty thousand people participated in organized mountain ascents, by contrast with four thousand in 1934. Once hooked, alpinists found it difficult to return to any other kind of tourist activity: two university students in 1940 had vowed to trade their mountain boots for an easy cycling vacation through the Caucasus, but once in the mountains, they felt the pull of “the mountain disease,” set aside their bikes, and worked for a month as volunteer instructors in an alpine camp.<sup>46</sup>

Local sports clubs and voluntary sporting societies organized within trade unions, enterprises, and educational institutions would provide the link between the independent tourist functions of the TEU and the physical culture committee. With active interests in competitive sports like soccer, these organizations only grudgingly accepted their new responsibility to organize tourist sections, and they allocated paltry sums for the purchase of tourist

46. Eva Maurer, “Alpinizm as Mass Sport and Elite Recreation: Soviet Mountaineering Camps under Stalin,” in *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*, ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Ithaca, NY, 2006), 141–162; and Maurer, *Wege zum Pik Stalin*; NSNM, 2 (1937): 25; *Desiat’ dnei v gorakh*, 1930–1940, silent film, RGAKFD, no. 1863; NSNM, no. 5 (1935): 7; “sons of the working class,” *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 8–9 (1932): 34–35; NSNM, no. 1 (1938): 2, 4; no. 3 (1939): 5; “mountain disease,” Viktor Korzun, “Gornaia bolezn’,” NSNM, no. 9 (1940): 22–23.



equipment like bicycles and ski poles. Only alpinism was likely to receive any support at all.<sup>47</sup>

Proletarian tourism, as the mass movement of young enthusiasts envisioned by its Komsomol founders, seemed to have lost its momentum by the second half of the 1930s. The OPTE had been dissolved because it had failed to develop tourism adequately, but the independent, active, proletarian side of tourism continued to languish under the joint sponsorship of the trade unions and physical culture committee. A letter from several tourists asking, "Who answers for tourism?" appeared in the central Party newspaper *Pravda* in March 1937 and triggered a plaintive debate. Under the OPTE, thirty paid tourism consultants in the Soviet Union's largest cities and several thousand activists had promoted independent tourism. The TEU employed only twenty consultants to help tourists, and the demise of the factory cells had left aspiring tourists with no source of advice and training. The publication of literature to guide independent tourists had ceased. The activist core had disappeared, the new TEU devoted all its effort to promoting the expensive and profitable package tours on the traditional itineraries, and the proletarian mass had lost its access to independent, healthful, and self-actualizing tourism.<sup>48</sup>

*Pravda* responded by summoning leading tourism officials and activists to a conference at its editorial offices.<sup>49</sup> The Central Trade Union Council agreed to reorganize its operations in order to devote more attention to the independent side of tourism; the Central Committee on Physical Culture and Sport pledged to create a new section to train tourism instructors. Still the mass of would-be independent tourists found little support: the TEU remained "indifferent" to tourism as of 1939, and in 1940 it withdrew entirely from its role in alpinism and handed over responsibility for this form of tourism to the trade unions' physical culture sections. Furthermore, it ruled that social insurance funds would be used only to support tourism vacations on package tours, not for independent tourism or training.<sup>50</sup>

Tourism purists may have felt badly served by the trade union tourist apparatus and ignored by the daily press, but their voices dominated the pages of *On Land and On Sea*. Its issues featured inspiring accounts of individual group trips, adventure fiction, travel writing, descriptions of interesting itineraries in far-off corners of the Soviet Union, and regular columns on tourist

47. Sports organizations were created in 1936 by the All-Union Council on Physical Culture and Sport. *Fizkul'tura i sport*, nos. 19–20 (1937): 6; *NSNM*, no. 7 (1936): 25–26; no. 1 (1939): 4; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 52–53; *NSNM*, no. 7 (1937): 15; *Trud*, 12 April 1938; 26 April 1941.

48. *Pravda*, 28 March 1937; 29 March 1937; *NSNM*, no. 1 (1938): 4; *Trud*, 11 April 1937; *NSNM*, no. 5 (1937): 4; *NSNM*, no. 12 (1937): 6; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69 (conference on mass tourism, June 1948), l. 3.

49. The meeting at *Pravda* was memorable enough that it was recollected ten years later at a conference of tourism activists. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69, l. 6.

50. *NSNM*, no. 5 (1937): 4; no. 1 (1939): 4; no. 5 (1940): 4, 22.



techniques. The magazine also offered detailed patterns for constructing rucksacks, tents, and kayaks. In the absence of other handbooks, *On Land and On Sea* had become the scouting manual for the independent tourism movement. It also regularly reported on the activities of local tourist organizations, sports societies, and groups of activists. In the late Soviet period, *On Land and On Sea* would be fondly remembered for providing a window onto the wide world of the Soviet Union and beyond. Yet often, in the 1930s, it found itself “a hair’s breadth from catastrophe” when opponents of independent tourism repeatedly tried to close it down.<sup>51</sup>

These purists opposed the commercial side of Soviet tourism, the focus on the planned package itineraries, and they had done so from the start, when the Society for Proletarian Tourism had fought to eliminate Sovetskii Turist. But the so-called operative deviation was both popular and profitable. The income from the sale of planned trips provided the basic source of revenue first for the OPTE and then for the TEU. Trade unions and their members preferred to purchase vouchers for these planned tourist excursions rather than organize their own self-made independent trips. The same critics who lambasted the TEU for “limiting itself to organizing paid itineraries, selling putevki and services for tourists,” also demanded that the TEU run its operations effectively. Critics condemned commercialism, but they also admitted that only economic efficiency and profitability could make tourism widely available to the proletarian masses.<sup>52</sup>

### The Business of Soviet Tourism

The TEU and tourism activists did not want to think of themselves as engaging in a business, but the goods and services they intended to provide required a businesslike approach to their task, and the economics of tourism constituted a major challenge in the Soviet Union of the 1930s. The Soviet tourist industry—quintessentially oriented toward service and consumption—emerged at a time when economic priorities emphasized the construction of gigantic industrial projects, hydroelectric dams, and railroads. At the same time, the last remnants of the small-scale private service sector had been forced out of existence. The OPTE and then the TEU needed to create from scratch a service industry combining accommodations, catering,

51. On memories of the journal, see I.I. Sandomirskaia, “Novaia zhizn' na marshe. Stalinskii turizm kak ‘praktika puti,’” *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'* 4 (1996): 163–172, and Evgeny Dobrenko, “The Art of Social Navigation: The Cultural Topography of the Stalin Era,” in *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (Seattle, 2003), 163–200. Tourist veterans still spoke wistfully of the journal in 1965, and nothing replaced it until 1966. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 750 (Central Council on Tourism plenum, May 1965), l. 160; NSNM, no. 1 (1939), 27; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69, l. 26.

52. *Biulleten' turista*, no. 6 (1930); *Turist-aktivist*, no. 2 (1932); nos. 11–12 (1932): 23, 50–51; nos. 2–3 (1933); NSNM, no. 12 (1933): 8; no. 11 (1936); no. 5 (1937); no. 7 (1937): 4–5; 12 (1937): 6 (quote); *Trud*, 12 April 1938; 11 April 1937.

specialized equipment, transportation, and skilled service personnel. This industry had to be cost-effective, but it could not be commercial. It needed to provide qualitative services in an economy measured by material units of output. Coping with these contradictions and their own inexperience, tourism officials failed to compete successfully with their vacation counterparts in the medical leisure sector.

Providing accommodations for the tourist on the road generated one of the greatest challenges for the young tourist movement and the tourist agencies. The Soviet Union had inherited few hotels from its tsarist predecessor; in the big cities, these had been converted to residences to augment scarce housing. In the primary tourist destinations of Crimea, the Caucasus, and the Black Sea coast, health resorts controlled the most attractive housing stock. Independent tourists could bypass the problem of housing by carrying their own tents and sleeping bags, or they were encouraged to seek inexpensive lodging with inhabitants of the territory through which they traveled. Hosts and guests would mutually educate one another.<sup>53</sup> In Moscow and Leningrad, the Commissariat of Enlightenment had organized hostels for teachers who visited during their summer vacations. Tourists could receive a cot for fifty kopecks a day in Moscow or a cot plus bedding, three meals, and excursions around the city for two rubles, eighty kopecks. Sovetskii Turist had offered visitors to Leningrad their choice of a place in the newly acquired Mariinskii Palace, at eighty kopecks a day without meals, or in the House of the Excursionist, a four hundred-bed dormitory, for sixty kopecks. Construction of a grandiose nine-story tourist center at Smolenskaia Square in Moscow had been a priority of the OPTE before its demise.<sup>54</sup>

Sovetskii Turist reported in 1929 that it operated one hundred bases accommodating ten thousand tourists for the summer season: most of these consisted of rented school buildings, and they were available only during the months of the school holidays. Noting that European governments gave credits to tourist firms to build hotels, Sovetskii Turist officials proposed that state subsidies for constructing a network of inexpensive tourist hotels would help to attract foreign travelers and their hard currency. The rival proletarian tourism society also organized its own tourist bases, most consisting of tent camps in the popular tourist regions of Crimea and the Caucasus.<sup>55</sup> By 1932, the now-combined OPTE announced it had opened nearly three hundred bases, some in its own buildings and others leased from government organizations. In most of the bases, a few permanent structures provided services such as dining facilities, while the tourists slept on cots in large and crowded tents.

53. Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 55; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga*, 23–24; *Proletarskii turizm*, 93, 102; A. Vlasov, “Dargkokh-Sochi na velosipede,” *NSNM*, no. 10 (1935): 8; A. and M. Vlasov, “Po goram i stepiam Kavkaza,” *NSNM*, no. 3 (1938): 7.

54. *Sputnik ekskursanta-prosveshchentsa po Moskve* (Moscow, 1928), 5–7; *Putevoditel' po Leningradu* (Leningrad, 1929), 18–19; *NSNM*, 25 (1932): 15; 7 (1936): 26.

55. GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2070, l. 10; *NSNM*, no. 6 (1929), inside front cover; *NSNM*, no. 21 (1930), inside front cover.



View of the Sochi tourist base, 1937–40. The structure in the rear housed dining facilities; large sleeping tents are in the foreground. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 420060. Used with permission of the archive.

Tourism activists envisioned that the tourist base (*turbaza*) in the Soviet Union would provide the optimal setting for the practice of proletarian, purposeful tourism, far more suitable for the proletarian tourist than a bourgeois hotel. A hotel provided bed and board in exchange for cold cash, but a tourist base would offer the comfort, amenities, and social purpose of a rest home, with proper furnishings and resources for learning, rest, and recreation. Like the trade union rest homes and resorts, the tourist base should be clean, cozy, and attractive, landscaped with palm trees and flower beds. The tourist should feel welcome, like a comrade, not a paying guest. Above all, the tourist base would become the center for cultured touring and excursions, catering to the tourists' political and cultural needs, providing lectures and films on the social questions of the day and advice about where to go and what to see. Under socialism, the comrade came first: "A base should be considered a good one only if the tourist would wish to return."<sup>56</sup>

Judging by reports that filled the tourist press, tourists seldom encountered such bases. Filth and overcrowding topped the list of complaints. Tourists

56. *Turist-aktivist*, no. 2 (1931): 25; nos. 10–11 (1931): 50–51 (quote, 50); no. 10 (1932); NSNM, no. 10 (1931): 2; no. 21 (1931): 8; no. 18 (1931): 14; no. 4 (1932): 15; no. 9 (1932): 15; nos. 19–20 (1932): 7; no. 14 (1933): 3; no. 2 (1934): 4; no. 12 (1934): 16; no. 17 (1934): 16.

coped with bedbugs and lice, soiled mattresses or none at all, no bed linens for cots, no utensils in the dining room, no hot water for washing.<sup>57</sup> Given the prevailing housing shortage, some base managers rented space to permanent residents, forcing tourists to sleep on floors or on the tops of tables. Finding a tent in a tourist base is like playing the lottery, wrote *Trud* in 1936: only the luckiest tourists found one with wooden floors and no holes in the canvas. Many bases were hidden away in unmarked neighborhoods, far from local tourist attractions and often impossible to find. The Sochi base drew repeated criticism for crowding men and women together in the same tents, for wet mattresses, high prices, and rude personnel. Tourists faced long lines at every turn: an hour or more to register their documents, two hours for a place in the canteen, and long waits to use the sinks and toilets.<sup>58</sup>



Interior view of the Tiflis tourist base, 1937–39. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 420097. Used with permission of the archive.

57. NSNM, no. 21 (1930): 16–18; no. 10 (1931): 2; no. 4 (1932): 15; no. 17 (1933): 13; no. 17 (1934): 16. German tourists in the 1930s encountered similar conditions. Heeke, *Reisen zu den Sowjets*, 366–368.

58. NSNM, no. 26 (1931): 8–9; *Trud*, 24 June 1936; NSNM, no. 4 (1932): 15; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 8–9 (1932): 21; NSNM, no. 9 (1932): 15; nos. 19–20 (1932): 7; nos. 28–30 (1932): 31; no. 1 (1937): 27; no. 12 (1934): 16; nos. 17–18 (1930), inside back cover; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 1 (1933): 28.

The supply of food for tourists on the move posed particular problems in a system in which all provisions were allocated on the basis of ration books and citizens received most of their nutrition through closed cafeterias at work.<sup>59</sup> Early proletarian tourists found that their Moscow ration books could not be exchanged for food on the road. So they stocked up in Moscow on rations that would last for two weeks or a month; one group sent a supplemental shipment of dried rusks to a Caucasus post office address so that they could resupply themselves en route. For the package tourists, the OPTE arranged with the Commissariat of Supply to allocate rations to be assigned to tourist bases. Independent tourists, theoretically included in this arrangement, usually had to fend for themselves, carrying most of their supplies with them: rusks, sugar, groats, potatoes, garlic, and tea. Sometimes they could supplement their meager diets with locally caught fish or meat purchased from local farmers. Other mechanisms for obtaining food scarcely existed. One independent traveler could not even purchase a meal in the Dneprostroi tourist base canteen, and in order to eat he had to spend his entire stay foraging in private markets.<sup>60</sup>

The famine conditions that swept the Soviet countryside in the wake of collectivization received no direct mention in the tourist press, but in conditions of extreme scarcity, the value of the twenty-three thousand ration books allocated to OPTE in 1932 made them very conducive to illegal disposition. A Communist Party Central Committee investigation of OPTE discovered that 63 percent of the tourist ration books could not be accounted for in 1932; officials in the central office had taken food allocated for tourists to Moscow and fed hundreds of staff members instead. The end of nationwide rationing in 1934 reflected a modest improvement in the food supply, but tourists, like health spa vacationers, complained openly about the quality of the meals they received at the bases. Corruption within the OPTE organization continued to deny tourists access to provisions for the road.<sup>61</sup>

Officials hoped that the transfer of tourism affairs to the more administratively experienced trade union organization would improve these conditions. The TEU received significant funds to expand the network of tourist bases, including the conversion of rest homes: by 1939 its budget had grown to 40 million rubles, compared with 6 million available to the old OPTE. Tourism agencies now shared with health resorts and rest homes the trade unions' social insurance fund. In 1932, the OPTE had managed to obtain 2 million rubles from this fund for the maintenance of tourist bases but nothing thereafter. Starting in 1936, these funds increased significantly, from 14 million in 1936 to 46.7 million in 1939. Insurance money for the construction of new facilities grew from 4 million in 1936 to 16.5 million in 1938. The TEU had inherited eighty-one tourist bases from OPTE in 1936; by 1938, it had added fifty-three more.<sup>62</sup>

59. Osokina, *Za fasadom "Stalinskogo izobil'ia."*

60. *Proletarskii turizm*, 93; NSNM, no. 7 (1933): 10.

61. NSNM, no. 6 (1933): 16; no. 10 (1935): 4; no. 20 (1934): 13; no. 15 (1935): 4.

62. *Trud*, 11 April 1937; 9 April 1940; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 179a (reports on TEU, 1936–1951), l. 28; d. 39 (reports from TEU, 1946), l. 52.

A tourist hotel on the slopes of Mount Elbrus, at an elevation of 4,200 meters, opened in 1939, with central heating, electricity, water, and space for one hundred tourists. By the start of 1940, the TEU boasted of new bases at the Tolstoy estate in Yasnaia Poliana, in polar Murmansk, and at the Borodino battlefield outside Moscow. By May 1941, the TEU had opened more than one hundred new tourist bases and tent camps, with a daily capacity of ten thousand, and had upgraded dozens of the best tourist bases in Crimea, Kiev, Peterhof, and the Caucasus to “comfortable tourist hotels.”<sup>63</sup> Just as with spa vacations, by the end of the 1930s, Soviet tourism had begun to assert its more pleasurable side. It is hard to evaluate the efficiency of the tourist operation, but the substantial infusion of capital after 1937 produced a noticeable expansion.

TEU did less well in other areas of the tourist economy: transportation and staff. As with food supply, the movement of tourists depended on the allocation of passenger spaces by other agencies, notably the railway commissariat. Guidebooks listed the relevant railway timetables, but tourists needed to book and pay for their own transportation. The commissariat ended its discounts for tourist travel in 1932, despite the appeals of tourism advocates. Finding a place on a train even at full price proved to be one of the banes of Soviet tourist travel, before and after the war. Round-trip tickets did not exist: tourists could not book their return trip until they had arrived at their destination, and they might wait for days before they could exchange their paid receipt for an actual place on a train. Overbooking was standard practice, both on the railways and on passenger steamships on the Black Sea route from Odessa to Batumi. The trade union tourist organization found it unsurprising that 81 percent of tourist complaints in 1937 concerned problems with transportation. Locally, tourists depended upon buses and touring cars to take them from place to place. Here too shortages ruled the day. Since buses seldom ran according to schedule, sometimes the most scenic parts of the journey along the Georgian Military Highway were navigated after dark. In the absence of buses, some tourists made their journeys in open trucks; others were forced to walk 150 kilometers on foot when their scheduled bus failed to appear. The lack of automobile transport also hampered local excursions. Even in 1940, the TEU had only thirteen motor parks, with 69 buses and 118 automobiles, to serve its 130 tourist bases and 143,000 tourists.<sup>64</sup>

63. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, l. 37; d. 39, l. 163; *Trud*, 22 October 1937; NSNM, no. 11 (1937): 30. The hotel received extensive publicity in the Soviet press, a sign of the prestige of Soviet alpinism and the regime's commitment to tourism, but as a business venture its operating expenses of seventy-five rubles per person per day were unsupportable. Instead, the TEU leased most of the hotel to the Academy of Sciences as a research base. NSNM, no. 6 (1940); *Trud*, 30 March 1940; 24 May 1941.

64. NSNM, no. 10 (1931): 2; no. 15 (1932); nos. 28–30 (1932): 31; Heeke, *Reisen zu den Sowjets*, 278; Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomii, f. 7458, op. 1, d. 2885 (river passenger service conference, September 1936), l. 14ob.; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, l. 12; *Trud*, 27 August 1939; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 39, l. 53.



As a service industry, tourism required trained and competent staff. A well-run tourist base employed a full-time manager, bookkeeper, dispatcher, cook, cultural organizer, and excursion guides. Alpine camps in addition needed skilled instructors who would train and guide groups through the mountains. The service and retail trade sectors in the Soviet economy were notoriously neglected: having chosen to base their planning mechanisms on the measurement of physical quantities, Soviet planners found service-based activities difficult to administer. Moreover, socialist ideology linked service and trade to the culture of the petite bourgeoisie. Nonetheless, the Soviet regime devoted considerable resources to developing its own “cultured” retail sector. Socialist consumer culture meant a “modern, rational, and hygienic retail environment,” with good manners and friendly service. Socialist service would be efficient, trustworthy, and attentive.<sup>65</sup> Cultured trade would create the cultured consumer. These ideals, however, clashed with the reality of shortages, the dream world of abundance subordinated to a real world in which the salesperson or ticket agent enjoyed the power to dispense scarce commodities according to his or her own whims or self-interest. This shortage economy encouraged corruption.

Finding, supervising, and retaining capable and honest tourism administrators and accountants remained a major challenge throughout the 1930s. Recruiting tour guides constituted an even bigger problem, for this work required political reliability as well as technical skill. Despite the aspiration of the OPTE and then the TEU to professionalize their tourist cadres, the work remained seasonal and tended to attract schoolteachers and students with long vacations, or “random” people weary of city life who found jobs in tourism as a short-term break from other occupations. The 1932 OPTE congress dreamed of professionalization, proposing a technical school and university programs to train excursion leaders. Periodic conferences of guides also attempted to promote standardized political content and effective pedagogical practice. Under the TEU, supervision of excursion work began to be systematized in a special methods department: as part of their training and application for certification, tour guides had to submit their written lectures (*besedy*) for review. These were carefully scrutinized for political, cultural, and geographical correctness. A lecture on the Volga River, for example, “incorrectly” referred to the ancient route between Bulgaria and Persia; it would be better to use the term “Iran.” And the lecturer forgot to mention that Lenin had been born on the Volga.<sup>66</sup>

The fine line between socialist profitability and crass commercialism found a reflection in the distinctive marketing strategy of Soviet tourism.

65. Amy E. Randall, *The Soviet Dream World of Retail Trade and Consumption in the 1930s* (Houndmills, UK, 2008), 39 (quote), 57, 95; Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917–1953* (Princeton, NJ, 2004).

66. *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 2–3 (1933): 20; *NSNM*, no. 5 (1935): 4; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 12 (lectures for the Seliger tourist base, 1938–39), ll. 16, 19.





Aspiring tourists receive kayak instruction on water tourism from the OPTE in the Moscow Park of Culture and Rest, 1933. Note the star and compass OPTE logo. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 018460. Used with permission of the archive.

Promoting an unfamiliar leisure activity, tourism activists needed to create a demand for their product, but these efforts took the form of agitation and propaganda rather than commercial advertising. Early efforts to encourage tourism adopted a mobilization strategy: the initial Society for Proletarian Tourism followed the established Soviet pattern of exhortation and campaigns to recruit its planned millions of proletarians into the tourism movement. The promotional efforts of Sovetskii Turist consisted of publishing guides to summer itineraries; it also produced posters listing itineraries for more targeted audiences like textile workers and metal workers.<sup>67</sup> Words dominated over images: informational and educational, the posters defined terms and explained the methods of the tourist movement. The OPTE relied above all on its members to spread the word about tourism through local exhibits in factory clubs, evenings of reports of trips, and displays of OPTE activities in public places like the Park of Culture and Rest. These messages promoted proletarian tourism as an integral part of becoming a new Soviet person.

Journalism provided most of tourism's publicity in the 1930s, including daily newspapers like *Vecherniaia Moskva* with its regular "Tourist Corner" column, but the tourist movement's own magazine offered the most comprehensive coverage of this new leisure activity. Through stories, reports, and photographs of Soviet tourists in exotic locations, *On Land and On Sea* invited readers to share in the fulfilling experience of active leisure. Elsewhere in the Soviet economy, consumer advertising consciously adopted Western forms in order to create a fantasy of what the socialist society was becoming.<sup>68</sup> Soviet tourism seldom ventured into this form of marketing.<sup>69</sup> Formal newspaper advertisements of tourist travel did not begin until the late 1930s, but even then they were primarily informational, inviting factory committees, for example, to purchase tourist putevki for their workers. A small drawing of a Black Sea shoreline (with palm tree) provided the only visual hook. Occasional advertisements from the Moscow office of the TEU, adorned with small drawings of mountains, shoreline, or sailboats, invited purchases of putevki on the standard itineraries. Although the TEU enjoyed a theoretical monopoly on the Soviet domestic tourist business, the shipping fleet and Inturist also sought customers for their cruises and tourist hotels through advertising.<sup>70</sup>

67. Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1929 goda*; Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii po SSSR na leto 1930 goda*; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 3a (Sovetskii Turist excursion posters).

68. Randi Cox, "All This Can Be Yours! Soviet Commercial Advertising and the Social Construction of Space, 1928–1956," in Dobrenko and Naiman, *Landscape of Stalinism*, 125–162.

69. An exception is a 1930 postcard, issued in an edition of one million, advertising Black Sea voyages on Sovtorgflot ships. George V. Shalimoff and George B. Shaw, *Catalogue of Propaganda-Advertising Postal Cards of the U.S.S.R. 1927–1934*, ed. Jean R. Walton (Norfolk, VA, 2002), 53.

70. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 14 May 1938; 8 June 1938; 26 June 1938; 31 July 1938; 7 March, 1938; 19 March 1938; 15 November 1938.



Advertising postcard from Sovtorgflot, the Soviet shipping fleet. “A sea voyage is the best vacation. Take your summer holiday on the Black Sea. Inexpensive fares, good meals, modern steamships.” From George V. Shalimoff and George B. Shaw, *Catalogue of Propaganda-Advertising Postal Cards of the U.S.S.R. 1927–1934*, ed. Jean Walton (Norfolk, VA.: United Postal Stationery Society, 2002), 53. Used by permission.

*On Land and On Sea* offered a more evocative drawing of tourist pleasures in a 1939 full-page advertisement. Its imagery implied that TEU tours combined the best of both self-locomotion and prepared itineraries and suggested new norms of the Soviet good life: a drawing depicted a man and a

## Туристская ПУТЕВКА



**ВЦСПС**

ТУРИСТСКО-ЭКСПУРСИОННОЕ  
УПРАВЛЕНИЕ

## ПУТЕШЕСТВИЕ — ЛУЧШИЙ ОТДЫХ

Советский туризм —

мощное средство познания  
социалистической родины

Туристско-экскурсионное управление ВЦСПС

организует в 1939 году

**путешествия по СССР**

Открыто 160 маршрутов

В Москву, Ленинград, Киев,  
Батуми, Тбилиси — Гора — Ватума  
(на родину тов. Сталина), В Шушенское  
(место ссылки В. И. Ленина), Нахичевань — Перекоп,  
Воросшиноград, Сталинград,  
Касторная — М. Феликс — В. Михайловна,  
Валуев и др. маршруты по следам  
гражданской войны.  
По Украине, Грузии, Азербайджану, Армении,  
Узбекистану, Татарии,  
Чувашии и другим национальным республикам.  
По пушкинским, горьковским, шевченко-ским ме-  
стам, в усадьбу Л. Н. Толстого и Ясной Поляне, до-  
мки Чехова и Ялта, Н. А. Островского в Сочи, а также  
по местам древнерусской живописи и архитектуры  
(Новгород, Палех, Мстеря, Холуй).

ТУРИСТСКО-ЭКСПУРСИОННОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ органи-  
зует проводимые путешествия по Волге, Каспию, Днестру, ка-  
вказу, Москве — Волге, Беломорскому, по Финскому, Оке и  
путешествия на озерах и базах на Чусовой, Ижевске,  
Свиголе и других местах.

Туристы могут совершить также автомобильные путеше-  
ствия по Крыму, Волжскому шоссе, дороге и по Черномор-  
скому побережью Кавказа и горно-лесные по Военно-  
осетинской и Военно-дагестанской территориям Кав-  
каза, на Эльбурс, по Кавказскому зимнему до-  
рогам, родному Крыму и Уралу, пешком на знаменитый Байгал, по Алтаю,  
Кавказу и в Иберии и многие другие.

Для обучения технике водного туризма открыты турист-  
ские лагеря на озерах: Скактер (Ильменская область), Селан  
(Армения), Гек-Гет (Азербайджан), Искра (Беларусь) и др.,  
а также альпинистские лагеря на Царе, Ахмате, Термине,  
Дедарово и школа инструкторов в Ямало-Ненецком.

**Продолжительность путешествия от 5 до 22 дней**

**Стоимость путевок от 90 до 720 руб.**

Приобрести путевки на маршруты, сезонные и местные, получить консультацию по всем во-  
просам туризма и альпинизма, а также помощь в организации самостоятельных путешествий  
и экскурсий. Городских и загородных, можно

### В ТУРИСТСКО-ЭКСПУРСИОННЫХ УПРАВЛЕНИЯХ ВЦСПС:

Москва (Арбат, 67),  
Ленинград (ул. Билинского, 13),  
Киев (ул. Ленина, 8),  
Минск (ул. Урицкого, 11/16),  
Горький (Краснофлотская, 52),  
Новосибирск (Дворец труда),  
Алма-Ата,  
Батуми,  
Грозный,  
Днепропетровск,  
Ереван,  
Иваново.

Иркутск,  
Кавказ,  
Калинин,  
Краснодар,  
Курск,  
Куйбышев,  
Махач-Кала,  
Мариуполь,  
Нальчик,  
Одесса,  
Петровское,  
Ростов на Дону,

Свердловск,  
Симферополь,  
Сочи,  
Сталинград,  
Ташкент,  
Тбилиси,  
Тула,  
Харьков,  
Челябинск  
и Ярославль.

Full-page advertisement for TEU package tours in *Na sushe i na more*, no. 5 (1939), inside back cover. The headline reads, "Tourist putevka. Travel is the best rest. Soviet tourism is a powerful agent for understanding our socialist native land. The Tourism-Excursion Authority of the Central Trade Union Council is organizing trips around the USSR for 1939." The small visual hook is overwhelmed by informational text.



woman, hikers with backpacks, resting on a seaside overlook. Down below, an automobile whisked travelers along the cornice, and out on the ocean, a cruise ship could be seen in the distance. Soviet tourism here speaks of pleasure (the views, the young man and woman) as well as vigor. But the bulk of the ad provided information on routes, prices, and means of transportation. Advertising returned to the pages of *Trud* in May and June 1941, but again this was purely informational, announcing the availability of tours and of tourist bases.<sup>71</sup> These ads, so poignant in light of our knowledge of the coming German invasion on 22 June 1941, shared *Trud's* back pages with offers of putevki to various rest homes and sanatoria.

Why the sudden flurry of advertising? A mobilization interpretation might suggest that even though the clouds of war were visible on the horizon, the regime wished to assure its citizens that normal life would continue. The earnest effort of the TEU to generate tourist revenue suggests a more commercial interpretation. The experience of the 1930s had taught the tourist agencies that they needed to advertise in order to fully utilize their facilities outside the peak vacation season. The fear of impending war may have produced a decline in the purchase of summer leisure travel, leaving rest homes and tourist bases without a sure source of income for the summer of 1941. These ads, placed by individual proprietors of leisure spaces (such as the Union of State Trade Employees), reflected an effort to drum up demand for their specific locations, not to promote the good life of leisure more generally. The authoritarian Soviet regime spoke with more than one voice: the centrally planned economy harbored many niches for institutional enterprise.

### The Two Sides of Proletarian Tourism

From the Commissariat of Enlightenment to the Komsomol to the trade unions' Tourism-Excursion Authority, a basic fault line divided the tourist movement. The purists believed that Soviet tourism should be a mass movement with millions of members, and they stressed the physical culture aspects of tourism—doing—over the sightseeing elements. They believed that hardship and hard work rewarded the tourist far more richly than being conveyed passively in a sightseeing bus. They scorned both market and managerial considerations: as a mass movement, tourism would be self-sustaining and inexpensive, financed through the dues and contributions of its millions of practitioners in addition to state insurance and transportation subsidies. They insisted that independent touring, not the package tour, was the most authentic and valuable touristic experience. The managers, castigated as aliens in their Sovetskii Turist form, reproduced themselves in the voluntary Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions and later in the trade union TEU. They may have paid lip service to proletarian tourism as a mass move-

71. NSNM, no. 5 (1939), inside back cover; *Trud*, 21 May 1941; 28 May 1941; 17 June 1941.

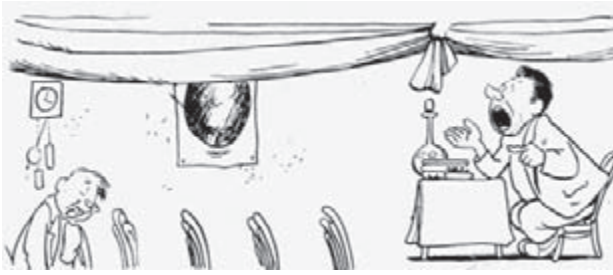
ment, but they focused on the business, not the romance, of tourism. They worked less to expand the numbers of the touring public than to provide comfortable and predictable programs for those Soviet citizens who could afford to take the trips they sponsored. They recognized that Soviet tourism would have to finance itself not through the dues of millions of members but by the revenue generated from prepaid package tours, and so they concentrated their energies and resources on this most lucrative and manageable side of the business. They took consumer preferences seriously, and they devoted their attention to improving services and increasing the comforts available to Soviet tourists on the road. Working within the system of the planned economy, the tourism managers recognized the utility of market considerations and adapted accordingly. For them the promise of proletarian tourism required fulfillment through comfortable and predictable conditions.

Even as the commercial variant of Soviet tourism gained hegemony in the second half of the 1930s, the purists still sought to preserve some of the voluntarist, enthusiastic flavor of the early years of the proletarian tourist movement. Responding to the increasing bureaucratization of the TEU, contributors to *On Land and On Sea* advocated the creation of tourist clubs that would serve the much-neglected independent tourists. Such clubs would provide a space for volunteer enthusiasts to share experiences and provide advice and consultation to aspiring cyclists, alpinists, canoers, and backpackers. They could serve in the same way the OPTE cells were meant to function before 1936, as centers of tourism mobilization. The first such club opened its doors in Rostov-on-Don in 1938, although because of “unsuccessful leadership” and the unwillingness of the TEU to provide subsidies, this and other tourist clubs did not even survive to the beginning of the war.<sup>72</sup> The purists also touted the superiority of volunteer (*obshchestvennye*) instructors over the paid professionals employed by the TEU’s tourist bases and alpine camps. Only tourists themselves, not bureaucrats, they wrote, could inspire others to join the mass movement. Only an army of volunteer instructors could provide training for the millions of tourists the movement hoped to attract.<sup>73</sup>

Tourist enthusiasts also stressed the value of local tourism as an inexpensive alternative to the more celebrated package tours. Tourist clubs and volunteer instructors could organize outings for small groups on holidays and weekend days off, winter and summer, training for longer trips and introducing beginners to the pleasures of the outdoors. In its regular column of responses to readers’ questions, *On Land and On Sea* applauded one Leningrader’s aspiration to spend his summer vacation kayaking in the north but recommended he begin with one-day trips close to home in order to de-

72. NSNM, no. 9 (1936): 2; no. 11 (1936): 2; no. 1 (1937): 6; no. 2 (1937): 29; no. 5 (1937): 4; no. 6 (1937): 26; no. 1 (1938): 2; no. 1 (1941): 2.

73. NSNM, no. 8 (1934): 3; no. 16 (1934): 4; no. 15 (1935): 7 (which lauds the unpaid water tourism activist Pokrovskii, who spent three to four hours daily on tourism affairs); no. 11 (1940): 4.



Where is tourism here? “We have not yet eliminated those entirely unnecessary reports on general themes like ‘On the significance of tourism’ and ‘What is the OPTE,’ etc.” *Na sushe i na more*, no. 9 (1935): 14.



Where is tourism here? “The trip booklets of many organizations of the OPTE fall into the hands of ‘beachgoers,’ occupying not only the beach but also the OPTE tourist bases. For genuine tourists there is often ‘no space.’” *Na sushe i na more*, no. 9 (1935): 14.

velop his skills. The trade unions’ TEU did little to promote this most accessible form of tourism, complained activists, despite the mandate given it at the time of its founding. Local tourism instead became the task of the tourists themselves, such as a group from the Moscow TEU that had become renowned as the “longlegs” for their weekly practice of forty-kilometer hikes. By 1940, they had become leaders of numerous local tourist groups. “For us Moscow tourists, travel in the Moscow region is an excellent school of endurance and orienteering, expanding our horizons and helping us become educated cultured people.” Tourists could find a world to discover in their own backyards.<sup>74</sup>

The enthusiasts of proletarian tourism—those who advocated for tourism to become a mass movement—remained in a minority in the 1930s. The pub-

74. *Vecherniaia Moskva*’s “Tourist Corner” featured regular announcements for Saturday and Sunday hiking trips in the Moscow region sponsored by the Society for Proletarian Tourism, *Sovetskii Turist*, and the Society for the Study of the Moscow Region starting in 1929. *NSNM*, no. 1 (1930): 15; no. 13 (1934): 4; no. 11 (1934): 3–4; no. 17 (1934): 4; no. 7 (1936): 23; no. 4 (1940): 15; no. 1 (1937): 2; no. 4 (1938): 2; no. 8 (1940): 4–5 (quote).



lic image of Soviet tourism became linked to palm trees, mountain peaks, and the seaside (with or without a romantic sunset). A 1935 cartoon series in *On Land and On Sea* captured the irrelevancy of local tourism activists under the caption “Where is tourism here?” A sign in a park announced a “local tourism” event, which consisted of a blathering bureaucrat extolling the merits of tourism and one person in the audience, asleep. The “tourists,” in the next cartoon, could all be seen on the beach.<sup>75</sup>

The Soviet tourist industry by the late 1930s had not yet provided an attractive product, and tourism as the best form of rest appealed to a small coterie of enthusiasts. Conditions for comfortable touring either did not exist or remained accessible only to the very few, such as the tourists who appear in the 1936 film scripted by Il'ia Il'f and Evgenii Petrov, *One Summer*.<sup>76</sup> In the depths of the scenic Caucasus Mountains, two aspiring automobile enthusiasts can only stare in envy as an open touring car speeds through their dusty village. They argue about whether the car is a Lincoln or a Mercedes, confirmation of the shortage of Soviet-made tourist transport. Going over a bump in the road, the touring car loses its spare tire, and the enthusiasts cry, “Tourists! You lost your tire!” in an attempt to alert them. But the holiday makers have no time for the local heroes (and the heroes keep the tire to use on their own car they are building). The film reproduced a powerful image of the Soviet tourist in popular culture: attractively mobile but privileged and alien. Nonetheless, a small minority of Soviet citizens actively sought tourism as the best form of rest in the 1930s, even if they disagreed on the most appropriate form and levels of comfort. The next chapter examines the appeal and drawbacks of Soviet tourism for the participants themselves.

75. *NSNM*, no. 9 (1935): 14.

76. *Odnazhdy letom*, dir. Khanan Shmain and Igor' Il'inskii (Ukrainfil'm, 1936), script by Il'ia Il'f and Evgenii Petrov.

## chapter three

# The Proletarian Tourist in the 1930s

## Seeking the Good Life on the Road

The relationship of socialism to the good life constitutes one of the fundamental problems in interpreting the history of the Soviet Union. The crash industrialization program launched in 1928 under the name of the first five-year plan aspired to produce an economy of plenty but to what end? The need for military defense certainly dominated these planning considerations, but so did the idea that socialism rather than capitalism could permit a poor country like the USSR to catch up to the West and to share in the good life already enjoyed by capitalist bourgeoisies. This life emphasized material comfort, even luxury, and ease. Socialism, believed its visionaries, could emulate this life of comfort and make it accessible to all the people, not only the few. But a socialist and democratic good life could also eschew material commodities altogether and emphasize the nonmaterial pleasures of the mind and experience, of art, friendship, and community. The experience of Soviet tourists in the 1920s and 1930s directly contributed to an elaboration of the meaning of Soviet socialism and its ability to construct an alternate and superior good life.

In the beginning, as we have seen, tourism and vacations promoted a life of useful leisure, providing an antidote to the intensity of socialist forms of production such as shock work and socialist competition. Real proletarians needed the benefits of rational leisure more than any other social group, and along with priority access to the kurort system as proletarian repair shops, workers could also benefit from active vacation leisure, tourism. One should not think of tourism as a gentry affair, wrote the activist Bergman in 1927: "It is a nasty habit to think in this way: in the end, we ourselves are masters of our own lives, and it's time to get away from our habits of slavish self-limitation: 'Only gentlemen can do this,' or 'What can we do?' Not true! Despite our poverty, workers can live much better, more beautiful, and more interesting lives."<sup>1</sup> Thus as chapter 2 has shown, the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions intended to put millions of factory workers into organized and self-organized travel.<sup>2</sup>

1. Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 52–53.

2. RGASPI, f. M-1, op. 4, d. 38 (Komsomol secretariat, 29 March 1929), l. 184; *Biulleten'* (Central Council and Moscow Oblast Section of the Society for Proletarian Tourism), nos. 2–3 (1930): 24; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 8 (1931): 41.

All travel contributed to the good life, but “proletarian tourism,” as defined by the original Society for Proletarian Tourism and its successors, enabled the best life. Self-planned, autonomous (*samodeiatel'nye*) journeys by small groups by foot, boat, bicycle, skis, or horseback most effectively developed the qualities of the new Soviet person. Preparing, planning, and executing the journey shaped the proletarian world view just as much as the tourism objects—the places, people, and sights to be seen. The proletarian tourist, a “son of the working class,” traveled “not to ‘get away from people, to rest the spirit and temporarily to forget about daily cares,’ but to strengthen the will, learn to subordinate his interests to that of the collective, to gather new strength and impressions, so that when he returns to the work collective, he is able to give to it much greater strength.” The proletarian tourist helped the state by gathering in a scientific way new knowledge about the country, locating new sources of raw materials, filling in blank spots on the national map.<sup>3</sup> Reciprocity, both giving and receiving, distinguished the socialist good life from its bourgeois competitors.

Two forms of tourism earned opprobrium as inappropriate models for proletarian emulation. Tramping, or vagrancy (*brodiazhnichestvo*)—travel by an individual for romantic glory or self-satisfaction—received official condemnation in numerous state publications throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Nonetheless, as we shall see, this was a widespread phenomenon.<sup>4</sup> We have also seen that tourism activists disdained the commercialism of organized group tours. Yet this kind of tourism constituted an important element of the Soviet Union’s official leisure practice, as chapter 2 has shown. The packaged group tour had become an integral part of *Soviet* tourism. But was it *proletarian* enough?

In fact, the term “proletarian tourist” (like *turizm* itself) possessed two meanings. On one hand, a Soviet individual who toured in the proletarian, as opposed to the bourgeois manner defined by the activists in the OPTE and tourism movement, could assume the proletarian label. During the 1930s, the prescriptive proletarian tourist participated in autonomous, independent trips; he or she did not follow the herd on a packaged, planned excursion. On the other hand, any member of the working class, a production worker (*rabochii*) or later in the 1930s the more ambiguous *trudiashchikhsia*, a laboring Soviet person, could be labeled a proletarian tourist. Any tourism performed by the right-thinking Soviet person could be construed as proletarian tourism. From these dual meanings arises the basic dilemma of proletarian authenticity. Was the proletarian tourist the one who traveled in small independent groups by foot, boat, or bicycle, or was he or she any Soviet person who ventured out beyond the limits of everyday surroundings to experience something new?

3. *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 8–9 (1932): 35–36; see also *NSNM* throughout its existence from 1929 to 1941.

4. *KP*, 4 March 1927; *Biulleten' turista*, nos. 4–5 (1930): 5–6; *NSNM*, no. 4 (1930): 1; V. Antonov-Saratovskii, “Doloi brodiazhnichestvo!” *NSNM*, no. 7 (1930): 1–2.

We might label these two inflections as “proletarian” and “Soviet” tourism. Proletarian tourism represented a subset of Soviet tourism, but not all proletarians wished to tour in the proletarian manner or to tour at all. Nor did they all earn their livelihoods as production workers in Soviet industry. This chapter explores the experiences of tourists in both independent travel and package tours and shows how in the 1930s, proletarian and Soviet tourists competed for cultural hegemony and fiscal primacy. By the end of the 1930s, the Soviet tourist eventually triumphed over the proletarian one, a victory of comfort over purposeful leisure; but the values associated with proletarian tourism—health, independence, self-reliance, and knowledge production—occupied the ideological high ground, privileging the proletarian tourist as the most authentic Soviet person.

### Authentically Proletarian: The Independent Tourist

From the beginning, as we have seen, activists touted proletarian tourism as the best form of vacation, travel that served the nation through knowledge building and good works, rational rest that provided the laboring body with ideal conditions in which to restore lost energy, and significantly, travel that was fun. Both purpose and pleasure competed in an uneasy coalition as the key element in attracting Soviet citizens to tourism. Proletarian tourists took on serious tasks as part of their summer vacations. The collection of scientific knowledge emerged as an important rationale for the expansion of tourism: every tourist group was expected to include exploration for natural resources in their trip plan, and many set forth armed with specific requests to collect specimens for various museums and laboratories. Ten thousand tourists searched for raw materials in 1932, declared the magazine *Turist-aktivist*, uncovering new resources for the second five-year plan.<sup>5</sup>

Tourist self-development began in winter, when travelers would anticipate their routes by studying the regions through which they planned to travel and by learning the languages of the local inhabitants. Otherwise, the journey would be wasted. “We simply decided to go, in order to spend our vacation [*otpusk*] more interestingly, and to see new places. This was our mistake. . . . Having arrived at a particular settlement, we often didn’t know what we were supposed to notice, what was most interesting to see.” Preparing for a journey, poring through guidebooks, and seeking corroborating advice contributed to the pleasures of modern tourism, creating anticipation as well as know-how. “Tourist dreams colonize all those other fifty weeks, when we are not on vacation,” writes the sociologist Orvar Löfgren.<sup>6</sup>

5. *NSNM*, no. 9 (1929): 12; no. 11 (1929): 13; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 7 (1931): 20; nos. 11–12 (1932); nos. 2–3 (1933): 6; *NSNM*, nos. 2–3 (1933): 6; no. 12 (1939): 2.

6. “We simply decided,” *NSNM*, no. 10 (1929): 12. Recall Urbain: “It is not enough to see, it is necessary to see well.” *L’Idiot du voyage*, 65. Löfgren, *On Holiday*, 7.

Socialists would not merely interpret the world; their mission was to change it. Proletarian tourists brought socialist propaganda to the peoples through whose territories they traveled. Socialist construction demanded that urban tourists devote some of their vacation elsewhere to campaigns for collectivization, for literacy, for better roads, and for radio. Tourists explained the building of the Moscow metro and illuminated the stakes of the trial of the counterrevolutionary Trotsky; throughout the 1930s, they brought their political skills to help mobilize local populations for Soviet election campaigns.<sup>7</sup>

A purposeful vacation included the rational mobilization of the tourist's physical capabilities. Although tourism lagged behind the health spas and even the physical culture movement in its medicalization, early tourism advocates had begun to develop a set of scientific principles to guide healthy and rational tourism. Fresh air and moderated exercise aided the circulation and restored balance to the organism. The state institute for kurort medical science had begun to develop guidelines for appropriate itineraries and locations for various groups of tourists. Tourists needed to learn that the Caucasus was a "nest of malaria" and that they should not travel without quinine. If they returned home more tired or sick than before departure, the value of travel would be nullified. Therefore, like patients at a resort or rest home, tourists needed to consult a doctor before leaving for a journey, a practice often ignored. Sending unfit tourists to alpine camps squandered state resources: at one trade union camp in 1937, 15 percent of participants had to leave because of ill health, and another 20 percent were not fit enough to be allowed to participate in the scheduled mountain treks. Doctors elsewhere scandalously certified epileptics and tourists with missing limbs as fully fit to engage in mountaineering.<sup>8</sup>

Properly organized and rationally pursued, tourism also provided pleasure and fun. Some tourist activists acknowledged that sometimes the movement erred too much in the direction of purpose. "We need to admit outright that sometimes there is scarcely any difference between a tourist outing and a political school, between an excursion and a mobilization brigade [*buksirnaia brigada*]." If a tourist trip became burdened with too many assignments, too many leaflets to distribute, too much knowledge to acquire, the trip became formalistic and uninteresting. Speaking at a seminar for tourist base leaders, the chairman of the OPTE Central Council, Traskovich, emphasized the need to pay attention to gaiety and cheerfulness. A 1934 cartoon, "On Foot on the Volga," illustrated the tedium that set in when the tourist plan included too many lectures. Lectures entitled "The Zhiguli Past," "The Environs of Samara,"

7. Leaflets enumerating these tasks are in GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1 (Society for Proletarian Tourism materials, 1930), ll. 96–102; NSNM, no. 3 (1930), inside back cover; no. 4 (1937): 22; no. 12 (1939): 2.

8. V. E. Sochevanov, *Rol' turizma v ratsional'nom otdyke* (Moscow, 1930), 23; NSNM, no. 3 (1931): 20; nos. 28–30 (1932): 24; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 11–12 (1932): 32; NSNM, no. 13 (1935): 6; no. 4 (1938): 14; no. 4 (1939): 19.





On foot along the Volga. "It is unacceptable to turn tourist outings into boring bureaucratic monotony with canned lectures and activities. . . . You can seek out bracing sunny itineraries, boating excursions, voyages on big steamships. . . . Here is an itinerary for the Zhiguli hills: 'Samara to Krasnaia Glinka—on foot along the Volga.'" *Na sushe i na more*, no. 16 (1934): 11.

and "The Process of Getting Water" all left the audience yawning. Young men and women on the march should not only collect plant specimens and observe the lives of culturally different populations but also sing, play games, make music, and enjoy themselves. Some games so alarmed visiting German

alpinists in 1930 that they warned German girls not to take part in mountain trips in the USSR, where allegedly Soviet boys and girls “married” for the duration of the tour and then bought a two-ruble divorce when the trip was over.<sup>9</sup> Tourist travel offered romantic adventures similar to the spa vacation but added scenery and healthy effort to the mix.

The completely independent group journey represented the most authentic form of proletarian tourism. The tourist chose the route, studied it, and formed a group of friends to carry out the trip, capturing the essential core of tourism’s benefits, argued M. Shugal in *On Land and On Sea* in 1934. We should never forget that tourism’s most important feature was “interesting, healthy rest surrounded by nature, not motionless, but connected with movement through tens and hundreds of kilometers.”<sup>10</sup> Like all tourists, independent tourist groups encountered the nation, developed self-reliance and self-esteem, toned their bodies, and practiced military skills, but independent tourists accomplished all this more authentically precisely because they had assumed the responsibility for organizing and carrying out the journey without tutelage from above. Independent tourists could travel anywhere because they created their own itineraries. This Soviet tourist, like the ideal Soviet subject, was self-actualizing and self-motivating, voluntarily adopting and following principles of mutuality, service, friendship among peoples, and citizenship.

John Urry theorizes about the “tourist gaze,” constructed in relationship to its opposite, nontourist, everyday forms of social experience. The distinction between everyday life and the extraordinary experiences of tourism defines the gaze. In encouraging the tourist to be a self-conscious and self-actualizing traveler, the Soviet organizers of tourism simultaneously attempted to structure the ways in which tourists made sense of this distinction. They needed to learn how to be tourists. “We gaze at what we encounter. And this gaze is as socially organized and systematized as is the gaze of the medic.” Urry further subdivides the tourist gaze into romantic (the self in “solitudinous contemplation of nature”) or collective, in which the presence of large numbers of people gave a sight its significance as a “tourist attraction” (cities, seaside resorts). The tourist gaze could also be historical—seeking to explore and understand the past—or modern. And it could be authentic (the battle fields at Borodino) or inauthentic (the Borodino diorama). Soviet tourism could incorporate all these gazes, but the independent proletarian tourist was in an ideal position to combine both the solo, romantic gaze and the collective gaze simultaneously structured by the needs of society at large and by the interests of the small touring group. Urry continues that “the gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs,” the constructed

9. *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 2–3 (1933): 7 (quote); Traskovich (chairman of the presidium of the Central Council of the OPTE), in *NSNM*, no. 8 (1934): 11; no. 16 (1934): 11; no. 16 (1930): 2.

10. M. Shugal, in *NSNM*, no. 15 (1934): 4; O. Arkhangel'skaia, *Samodeiatel'noe putestvie* (Moscow, 1939), 4.



objects of sightseeing.<sup>11</sup> Here the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions could assist the independent tourist, offering guidebooks, maps, and advice on technique and itineraries from experienced instructors. Each group of independent tourists need not reinvent the itinerary or construct the gaze anew.

A small flow of handbooks beginning in the 1920s offered aspiring tourists basic instruction on the value of and methods for independent tourism. Each of them emphasized the importance of individual initiative, motion, and collectivity: the self-actualizing tourist selected and planned a suitable route through nature, sharing this experience with an immediate tourist group and also through written and pictorial records of the journey that could be shared with future tourists.<sup>12</sup> Such methods and prescriptions bear a close resemblance to the advice offered by the well-developed German hiking movement, which by the early 1920s had produced a socialist hiking society, the Friends of Nature, as well as the more nationalist Wandervogel (ramblers).<sup>13</sup> The philosophy of the German nudist movement evoked similar principles of health, the body, and a prescribed regimen.<sup>14</sup> Although independent tourism allegedly required autonomy and developed initiative, the regime that these handbooks advocated served to channel this independence along quite structured lines. Independence produced value only as long as it conformed to the broader prescriptions of healthy, safe, and socially productive mobility.

The journey began with the formation of the group, not too small, not too large. One handbook writer recommended an optimal size of four to six people, large enough to deal with hazards on the route, small enough to require only one tent for sleeping. Above all, the members of the group should share similar interests and levels of skill: ideally, they would be experienced members of local tourist groups, known to each other through work and weekend

11. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London, 1990), 1, 45–46, 3.

12. Bergman, *Otdykh letom*; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga turista*; Barkhash, *Sputnik turista*; Arkhangel'skaia, *Rabota iacheiki*; Arkhangel'skaia, *Samodeiatel'noe putesthestvie*; O. Arkhangel'skaia, *Kak organizovat' turistskoe putesthestvie* (Moscow, 1947); Iv. Musovskii, *Sputnik turista* (Moscow, 1937); B.B. Kotelnikov, *Sputnik turista*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1941); *Turist-aktivist*, no. 9 (1931): 7; no. 4 (1932): 25–26.

13. Scott Moranda, "Markers and Bodies: Hikers Constructing the Nation in German Forests," [www.nationalismproject.org/pdf/moranda.pdf](http://www.nationalismproject.org/pdf/moranda.pdf), 2000; John A. Williams, *Turning to Nature in Germany: Hiking, Nudism, and Conservation, 1900–1940* (Stanford, 2007). References to French academic studies on the physiology of hiking practice appear in one of the early Soviet handbooks as well. Bergman, *Pervaia kniga turista*, 68.

14. Williams, *Turning to Nature*, 52. The enthusiasm for nudism among German hikers seems not to have migrated to the USSR, except perhaps in an underground form. The eminent mathematicians P.S. Aleksandrov and A.N. Kolmogorov, for example, who became lifelong friends on an OPTE independent boating trip along the Volga, were fond of skiing cross-country (and doing their mathematical work) clad only in their shorts or even nothing at all except "dark glasses and a white panama." Aleksandrov, in particular, who had spent time in Germany in the 1920s, was a fervent nudist. A.N. Kolmogorov, "Memories of P.S. Aleksandrov," in *Kolmogorov in Perspective* (Providence, RI, 2000), 150.

outings and already fast friends; otherwise, “squabbles” and “ridiculous arguments” all too frequently could spoil the trip. It was not necessary to segregate groups by sex, counseled one female activist: experience had proven that women were just as able as men, and their presence in a group helped to “discipline” the men.<sup>15</sup>

The group should be formed well in advance of the planned dates of travel to allow for the accumulation of funds, training, and other preparations for the journey. Having decided to organize a trip to the Caucasus, for example, eight young women students in Moscow searched high and low for odd jobs in order to earn money for their trip. Others volunteered to work overtime cleaning their factories in the evenings; some saved money by giving up smoking or other pleasures; still others pooled the prize money received for shock work in their factories. Self-financing promoted initiative and fiscal responsibility. Others received supplemental funds from their local factory committees.<sup>16</sup>

Training helped to reveal weaknesses and problems. One group discovered only on the road that one of their members refused to eat with the others. He had brought his own supplies and prepared them separately, spoiling the trip for everybody. Similarly, practice outings revealed who had the stamina and personality to weather the unexpected events of a tourist trip. In the well-formed group, every individual would assume a special role. Each group needed its leader, but it was the steward (*zavkhoz*) on whom the success of the trip often depended. The steward organized the equipment and food and supervised the packing and carrying. A first-time boating tourist, the mathematician P. S. Aleksandrov, “quickly undertook to be our quartermaster and even before leaving Moscow he was buying delicacies of all sorts” for a group of three sailing the Volga in summer 1929. Every group would also appoint a photographer (no matter how many of them might bring along their own cameras), a diary keeper responsible for the all-important recording of the tourist experience, and a medic.<sup>17</sup>

During the months and weeks preceding the trip, the group would collect the necessary documents and supplies. River tourists who planned to boat along Soviet rivers were advised to write to local authorities to ascertain steamer schedules and to make sure that their route would not be blocked by timber rafting. Before leaving for a sailing trip on the Kama River, one Moscow group “ran a complicated labyrinth of agencies in order to get certificates and authorizations.”<sup>18</sup> All independent groups needed to register their trips

15. Arkhangel'skaia, *Kak organizovat'*; Bergman, *Otdykh letom*, 105–106; Arkhangel'skaia, *Rabota iacheiki*, 14–15.

16. *Proletarskii turizm*, 42–43, 27, 28, 37; Arkhangel'skaia, *Rabota iacheiki*, 31; *Biulleten' turista*, no. 6 (1930): 20.

17. *NSNM*, no. 3 (1939): 13; Kolmogorov, “Memories,” 148 (quote); Arkhangel'skaia, *Kak organizovat'*, 32–34.

18. *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, 20; *NSNM*, no. 10 (1929): 13 (quote). “The skeptical attitude of those around us and the journey around Moscow chancelleries and ‘bastions’ was a hundred times more difficult than crossing the Klukhorskii Pass.” *Proletarskii turizm*, 44.

with their local OPTE council before 1936 or with their trade unions thereafter; it was possible but very dangerous in the Soviet Union of the 1930s to travel without authorization. In the years of the first five-year plan, the most important document for independent tourists was the ration book, obtainable through the local OPTE committees. Tourists in the early 1930s carried most of their food with them. They also included rifles and fishing gear in their packs in order to stretch out the food supplies brought from home. By the second half of the 1930s, however, the food crisis had lessened, and tourists reported that it was possible to purchase provisions from local residents. Only if they planned to travel far from populated areas should tourist groups plan to carry their food supply with them.<sup>19</sup>

The trip regime provided the mechanism for the independent tourist's self-reliance and self-discipline. Rationality in touring followed logically from the rationality of the five-year plans and of socialist industry; even leisure required its rules, as we have already seen in the case of Soviet health resorts. Independent groups should select their itinerary on the basis of their experience and skill levels. By 1938, drawing on the accumulated experience of proletarian tourists themselves, the trade union tourist authority had divided independent routes into three categories of difficulty. Category 3 could accommodate beginning tourists, who should plan to travel about fifteen kilometers a day and to carry light packs weighing three kilograms for men and one kilogram for women. Category 1 tourists should have at least three or four years of touring experience; they were able to travel twenty-five to thirty kilometers a day in moderately hilly terrain, carrying loads of twelve–sixteen kilograms for men and six–eight for women. On the march, proper tourists observed a regular routine, starting the trip slowly and gradually building up stamina. Too many tourist groups, warned *On Land and On Sea*, started too energetically and found themselves seriously fatigued within just a few days. Pacing was all-important, including regular stops for meals, a rest hour after the noon meal, and a rest day after every three or four days on the road. Every evening the group would build its campfire; in the many trip reports, this was a treasured aspect of the experience that would continue to transfix tourists until the end of the Soviet regime.<sup>20</sup>

Remembering and recording the journey came to be an important element of the self-discipline of the trip regime and the tourist experience. In the workplace, the diary served as a disciplining part of the work process; writing encouraged self-reflection about the relationship between the worker and the job.<sup>21</sup> For proletarian tourists, the trip diary would structure the group's memories, but it would also congeal and transmit the social knowledge

19. NSNM, no. 12 (1929): 12; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 10 (1932): 14; NSNM, no. 5 (1937): 2; no. 3 (1939): 14; *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, 7, 21, 32, 35–36, 75, 118.

20. *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, 204–205; NSNM, no. 3 (1939): 13; no. 12 (1929): 14; no. 1 (1929): 14; no. 12 (1929): 12; nos. 17–18 (1930): 24; no. 9 (1934): 3; no. 8 (1935): 11; *Proletarskii turizm*, 18, 48.

21. Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*, 45.

acquired from touring. *On Land and On Sea* offered examples of tourist diaries from its very first issues. These and other early accounts reflect the way in which tourism both disciplined the tourist gaze and liberated the traveling individuals. Tourists recounted the awe-inspiring sites of socialist construction and described their own earnest social-political work in bringing culture to the local inhabitants. They also described the “indescribable impressions” of the natural landscape, the unbounded expanses through which they traveled, the “fairy tale realms” of frozen lakes and labyrinthine caves. They reported on practical matters such as what equipment worked well, how to cover their boats to protect them from high waves, and how to find lodgings in wet and stormy weather. These early accounts also conveyed the pride in accomplishing these difficult journeys: “We felt ourselves to be real Columbuses,” discovering “if only for ourselves, the never-before-seen ‘America’ of the Soviet north.” A group of young women from a Moscow sewing factory reported on their challenging trip through the Caucasus, each carrying fourteen kilograms of food and equipment over two hundred kilometers of mountain trails. In the face of those who doubted that women could find their way through the mountains, they wrote in their trip diary, “Let them laugh, let them not believe. We accomplished our task.”<sup>22</sup>

By 1930, *On Land and On Sea* had begun to offer advice about how best to share these experiences through the trip diary, now emphasizing recording as well as doing. Each group diary, supplemented by personal diaries of group members and by photographs, would constitute the archive for the tourists who followed. Consequently, tourists should make detailed notes on the entire course of the trip, especially where the group had found maps to be incorrect or incomplete. In writing, tourists should exercise care to avoid the bookish language of the old intelligentsia, to employ the language of the “toiling class” yet without condescension, cliché, or sentimentality.<sup>23</sup> These instructions became even more rigid with a 1934 invitation for tourists themselves to write trip reports that could be assembled into a guidebook for individual proletarian tourist groups. *On Land and On Sea* prescribed a standard template for trip reports, to include information on the basic geographical, natural, historical, and socialist features of the route; its length and means of travel; difficulties that might be encountered along the way; and practical advice about suitable equipment and where to obtain food and transportation.<sup>24</sup>

The rules for the trip diary emphasized the ways in which this writing project would extend individual knowledge to the whole collective of proletarian

22. “Real Columbuses,” *NSNM*, no. 1 (1929): 13–14; “Let them laugh,” *Proletarskii turizm*, 45–47.

23. *NSNM*, no. 21 (1930): 2; no. 7 (1930): 20. On the proper form of proletarian language that echoes these prescriptions, see Gorham, *Speaking in Soviet Tongues*.

24. *NSNM*, no. 16 (1934): 10. A collection of reports was compiled in 1935, but because of the financial and organizational difficulties of the OPTE, it did not appear until 1938, as *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, a compendium with information on thirty-one routes, all following the model prescribed in the *NSNM* 1934 article.

tourists. Yet actual reports from tourists deviated from these strictures. Along with reporting factual knowledge, diaries celebrated the personal autonomy of life on the road. Among the letters sent to Moscow's Bauman district council of the OPTE, most emphasized two key elements: good works (as covered in the guidelines) and adventures (which were not). Two aspiring teachers recounted a journey through the rivers and forests of the Urals in the summer of 1932, their group of six armed with five rifles and carrying food reserves for a month. They had undertaken to collect animal furs for the biological museum in Moscow, but they took special care to describe the dangers of the trip and their adaptability in confronting unexpected situations. A group of apprentices from a textile factory decided to spend their holiday rowing down the Volga. The OPTE delayed them for days with medical examinations and swimming tests; through their own initiative they managed to buy a boat from a fisherman, and only then did their "beautiful and successful" tour begin.<sup>25</sup> A fictionalized account of a Caucasus journey included the usual difficult mountain passes but also an encounter with a former local bandit, Seipul, complete with the frisson of danger that came from eerie cries in the night and from sharing a campfire with this reformed bandit. A group of rather inexperienced tourists to Lake Ritsa in the Caucasus described some harrowing descents by moonlight and their delight at stumbling across an alpine "corner of paradise," replete with waterfalls and bubbling springs. Theirs was a tale of survival and self-reliance, although they dutifully reported on how they had informed the local population about the international political situation.<sup>26</sup>

Natural and human obstacles provided independent tourists with the challenges that proved their worth as self-actualizing Soviet citizens. Although descriptions of difficult encounters helped to prepare future travelers, tourists themselves celebrated the opportunity to face these rigors and dangers, which set them apart from both stay-at-home vacationers and tourists on the domesticated package tours. Mosquitoes served as the scourge of the tourist, "the most dangerous beast in the Urals"; "mosquitoes didn't leave us alone." One group reported that although spreading salt around their tent might keep snakes away, the salt attracted cows that attacked their campsite. Bad weather was a constant companion on the march, threatening particular harm to tourists on the water, whose boats could be swamped by wind and high waves. Human dangers received less open discussion in trip reports, but one 1929 account mentioned the presence of pirates on the Volga, who preyed on the slow-moving rafts of hunters and tourists.<sup>27</sup> Far more commonly, however,

25. *Proletarskii turizm*, 22, 78–80; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 10 (1932): 14–15. By contrast, A. N. Kolmogorov claims to have rented a boat from OPTE in Iaroslavl' in 1929 that he was easily able to return to the society's branch in Samara. Kolmogorov, "Memories," 147–149.

26. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 5 (Krasnaia Poliana-Gagry expedition, 1934), ll. 10–46; *Proletarskii turizm*, 86–89.

27. *NSNM*, no. 1 (1929): 14, "most dangerous beast," 12; "mosquitoes didn't leave us," no. 4 (1929): 10; no. 10 (1930): 3; no. 13 (1930): 4; *Proletarskii turizm*, 74, 107, 112; *NSNM*, no. 12 (1929): 12; no. 10 (1935): 6; 20 (1935): 14; no. 8 (1929): 10.

tourists cited the obstacles thrown up by indifferent tourist base administrators, who relegated independent tourists to third-class tent accommodations and refused to honor their food coupons. A group of cycling tourists found a cold reception in 1934 at the Novorossiisk tourist base, whose registrar mistook them for local young people out to have a good time. The tourists eventually convinced the official that although they were dressed like locals, they were touring cyclists who preferred light clothing to heavy tourist gear.<sup>28</sup>

Truly bad trips, often publicized as “how not to travel,” served as a warning to the ill prepared and a further lesson in the need for tourist discipline. A scientist on a solo trek across a Caucasian glacier failed to heed expert advice and fell victim to an avalanche, lying injured six days before being discovered and taken to a hospital. Poorly formed groups and inadequate training led to a lack of harmony and cohesion on the trail. One activist described a quarrel he witnessed in the Caucasus over who should carry a small equipment bag: some argued they had carried more than their share, and in the end the group broke apart, one side returning home and the other continuing on to Georgia. A group of Belorussian students decided at the last minute to embark on a “production excursion” through the Caucasus, with no idea of what they should see, cramming so many factory visits in Grozny into a single day that they learned nothing and remembered nothing. Here too arguments led to the breakup of the group, and throughout the journey, the fatigue and dissatisfaction produced by poor planning led to arguments over every trifle. “No one should follow our example.”<sup>29</sup> Proletarian tourism required disciplined training and preparation.

Some bad trips ensued because tourists refused to submit to their group leaders, others because they too lightly assumed they knew about mountain travel. A novice group leader sent an even more inexperienced team to buy a sheep for dinner; the group lost the trail, fell down a ravine, and had to spend the night at an altitude of three thousand meters with no warm clothing. Later during that same trip, the group decided to forge ahead without their guide, but on a rainy and dangerous trail, their pack mule slipped over the side to his death, taking their supplies—all their reserve food and clothing—with him. A veteran alpinist woman ruefully shared a similar story of her first trip as a warning to others. She and three companions left their guided group on a mountain hike for an alternate route that would be “more interesting.” Unable to gauge their time, they dallied too long in the mountains, and when they attempted a breakneck descent along slippery paths, they barely managed to avoid plunging down a ravine to their deaths. As night fell, they built a fire and shared the last of their provisions: one cucumber and four

28. NSNM, nos. 17–18 (1930), inside back cover; no. 21 (1930): 16; no. 26 (1931): 8; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 12 (1931): 44; NSNM, no. 9 (1932): 15; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 8–9 (1932): 21, 42; NSNM, nos. 28–30 (1932): 31; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 1 (1933): 28; NSNM, no. 17 (1933): 13; no. 17 (1934): 16; *Trud*, 4 June 1936; NSNM, no. 11 (1934): 4.

29. NSNM, no. 11 (1929), inside front cover; NSNM, no. 11 (1930): 16; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 10–11 (1931): 47 (quote).



pieces of sugar for the four of them. Grateful for their rescue the next morning, they acknowledged the importance of study and preparation for safe and successful tourism.<sup>30</sup>

The difficult distinction between the self-actualizing merits of proletarian tourism and impetuous nonproletarian individualism found expression in a loud campaign against the practice of tramping, *brodiazhnichestvo*, mentioned above. Hundreds and maybe thousands of individuals in the Soviet Union had responded to the call of the wild and the possibilities of seeing the broad Soviet land by launching their own extended and individual travels. Celebrated in newspaper articles with titles like “Three Thousand Kilometers on Foot,” the “touring tramps” (*turbrodiagi*) spent months and even years on the road, supporting themselves by lectures on tourism or simply appealing to local soviets for donations to continue their journeys. Although the popular evening newspapers like *Vecherniaia Moskva* lent their columns to these publicity-seeking wanderers, proletarian tourism activists found danger in these exploits. Echoing Western European contempt for worker tramps who aspired to a “commoners’ Grand Tour,” *On Land and On Sea* denounced tramping as “petit bourgeois” in February 1930, at the height of the regime’s assault on the petit bourgeois peasantry. The practice had dangerously spread from among the wrong sort—“counterrevolutionaries, people deprived of voting rights [*lishentsy*], criminals, spies, and adventurers”—to honest but misguided proletarian and student youth. Tourism activists criticized these tramps for their lack of purpose, unlike a proper independent tourist group: “Tourism without purpose—this is the path to tramping,” wrote the weekly magazine *Physical Culture and Sport* in 1928. The length of the journey particularly distinguished the Soviet tramp. A real proletarian could achieve the purposes of a tourist adventure in a normal vacation period. “To ‘wander’ during vacation is not tramping,” wrote Bergman in his *First Book of the Tourist*. “But to abandon production, study, and all struggle and work ‘for three years’—this cannot be tolerated.”<sup>31</sup>

The campaign against tramping reached a crescendo in 1930 in the heat of the cultural revolution, but echoes continued throughout the decade. *On Land and On Sea* called on all local tourist organizations in 1936 to firmly reject and unmask “tourist globetrotters” who carried out their tramping under the flag of socialist tourism. Ironically, the campaign against tramping seemed to rebound against genuine independent tourists as well: fearing to aid and abet the unacceptable tourist tramps, local tourist bases found it easiest to refuse service to all independent travelers, not only those “wandering from base to base without any plan, moving only from one ‘beauty’ to the next” but all self-actualizing travelers. The OPTE had to remind them that they should

30. NSNM, no. 14 (1933): 9; NSNM, no. 5 (1935): 5–6.

31. NSNM, no. 10 (1929): 15; no. 4 (1930): 1; V. Antonov-Saratovskii, “Doloi brodiazhnichestvo!” NSNM, no. 7 (1930): 1–2; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 24 April 1930; NSNM, no. 4 (1936): 31; *Fizkul’tura i sport*, 5 May 1928, 3; Bergman, *Pervaiia kniga turista*, 200.



welcome all independent groups who had prepared their route in advance, carried registration documents, and carried out sociopolitical work. To further reward the organized and to discourage the tramps, the OPTE offered loans of tourist equipment only to officially registered independent groups.<sup>32</sup>

The phenomenon labeled “record breaking” (*rekordsmenstvo*) also deviated from proper tourism practice. Tourism that focused on breaking barriers—days in the saddle, kilometers on foot—took the tourist’s attention away from close and informed observation of the world he or she encountered. “It is ridiculous to associate travel with attempts to set records,” wrote *Komsomol’skaia pravda* in 1928. “Speeding along a route squanders the opportunity to carry out the fundamental task of the tourist—observation of a locality, nature, and the life of the local population.” Chasing kilometers, attempts to climb the greatest number of peaks or cross passes in the quickest time had contributed to a spate of accidents in 1932, some of them fatal.<sup>33</sup>

Independent tourism came to be identified as the most authentically proletarian form of Soviet tourism, and it received the greatest amount of press attention in the pages of *On Land and On Sea* throughout the 1930s. At the same time, tourist activists lamented its orphan status within the larger ambit of the Soviet package tour operations.<sup>34</sup> Official statistics throughout this period are notoriously unreliable: tourist organizations tended to count and double-count their travelers, including weekend day trippers and tourists taking local excursions. As noted in chapter 2, the OPTE reported that 33,900 tourists traveled on all-union itineraries in 1933, 69,980 in 1934, and 83,680 in 1936. Published figures for “registered independent tourists” indicated that 52,700 Soviet citizens toured in small groups in 1933, 82,900 in 1934, and 127,500 in 1935.<sup>35</sup> Such figures would prove that independent tourism was more popular and more “mass” than the package tours. In fact, unpublished statistics from the OPTE suggest a much smaller number of independent tourists: 26,690 traveled in 1934 (not 83,000 as later published), and the *plan* for 1935 called for 38,000 independent tourists.<sup>36</sup> Yet while independent touring did not engage the millions of proletarians originally envisioned by the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions, its ethos if not its reality had become an indelible part of Soviet vacation norms in the course of the 1930s. In the 1960s, as chapter 6 will show, the new urban intellectual class would enthusiastically embrace this type of tourism, a legacy that remains today in numerous tourist clubs who archive their trip diaries and photographs through the Internet.

32. NSNM, no. 4 (1936): 31; no. 13 (1931): 4 (quote); no. 5 (1934): 12.

33. NSNM, no. 7 (1930): 1; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 3 (1932): 7; *KP*, 7 July 1928; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 1 (1933): 7.

34. *Pervyi vsesoiuznyi s'ezd OPTE v voprosakh i otvetakh* (Moscow, 1932), 26; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 8–9 (1932): 21–22; NSNM, no. 12 (1936): 4.

35. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8 (central TEU materials, 1937), l. 56; NSNM, no. 2 (1937): 29.

36. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 1078 (OPTE presidium, January 1934–December 1934), l. 27. The planned 38,000 figure also appears in NSNM, no. 1 (1935): 4.

### The Beaten Path: The Path of Least Resistance

Despite the ideological preference for small-group independent tourism, most Soviet tourists encountered the pleasures of a vacation on the road by taking an organized group tour. Activists scorned such package tours for their inauthenticity, implying that tourists who chose to take package tours lacked imagination and courage; they simply followed the beaten path, the well-worn and hackneyed routes to the Crimea, the Caucasus, or down the Volga. A beginning tourist might wish first to encounter a Caucasus itinerary on a group tour, in which the tourist organization provided all food, lodging, transportation, guides, and instruction, but “real tourists” would chafe at such dependency. Package tours produced the stereotypical “tourists with yellow suitcases,” like those in the film *One Summer* who negotiated the picturesque curves of the Georgian Military Highway riding in automobiles with their lapdogs beside them. Tourism purists nicknamed this route Petrovka, after the fashionable shopping street in Moscow, reinforcing their propaganda efforts toward independent touring as the most appropriate form of *proletarian* tourism.<sup>37</sup>

Polar distinctions between authentic solo tourists, Robinson Crusoes, and the mindless followers of fashion—the idiot travelers or Phileas Fogs—abound in the scholarly literature on tourism.<sup>38</sup> Tourists themselves internalize these distinctions, suggest sociologists, producing the “self-hating tourist.” Dean MacCannell describes a “pronounced dislike, bordering on hatred, for other tourists, an attitude that turns man against man in a *they are the tourists, I am not* equation.” But MacCannell rejects this formulation, arguing for a basic authenticity for all tourists, whether Robinson Crusoe or Phileas Fogg. Every tourist seeks to comprehend the differentiation of society, and each one hopes to penetrate the “rear spaces” of his or her destinations as well as their public fronts. Over time, argues MacCannell, tourists will gain confidence in their ability to share the experiences of others.<sup>39</sup> Traveling with the guiding structure of a group tour, implies MacCannell, is no less authentic than striding forth on one’s own to encounter the world, for it is the encounter that provides knowledge and value, not the means by which it is made.

Critics of Sovturism and the OPTE package tours shared the prevailing contempt that MacCannell has sought to allay. These critics frequently labeled the package tour as inauthentic, commercial, and the path of least resistance.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the historical record provides remarkably scant evidence about the nature and scope of this most common form of Soviet tourism.

37. NSNM, no. 1 (1929): 12; no. 4 (1929): 12; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 30 August 1930; NSNM, no. 3 (1939): 13; no. 4 (1937): 2; no. 9 (1929): 8.

38. Urbain, *L'Idiot du voyage*, 1–8. Daniel J. Boorstin famously dismisses contemporary tourism as make-believe, as “pseudo-events.” “From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel,” *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York, 1992). James Buzard explores this theme through literature: *The Beaten Track*.

39. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 13, 94, 102–103, 106–107.

40. NSNM, no. 12 (1937): 6; no. 7 (1937): 15; no. 3 (1938): 6.

Nonetheless, the existing sources permit an exploration of the ways in which this tour incorporated Soviet values, which were simultaneously modern and socialist.

Despite grand hopes about millions of tourists, we know that the annual number on these planned routes grew modestly, from about twenty-four thousand in 1930 to nearly eighty-four thousand by 1936. Yet they received the bulk of the resources of the tourist organizations: food supply, most tourist base spaces, transportation, and much of the time of the office staff at OPTE and later the trade union TEU, who devoted their energies to managing the flow and services of planned tourism.<sup>41</sup> The joint-stock company Sovtur had operated 29 routes in 1929, ranging in length from ten to forty days; in 1930 Sovtur (before the merger into OPTE) expanded its offerings to 77 routes. By 1933 the OPTE had developed 106 all-union excursion itineraries, but in fact many of these failed to attract tourists: the year produced a financial fiasco for the tourist organization, and in 1934 OPTE scaled back to just 31 routes, the same level as in 1929. Gradually, OPTE consolidated and adjusted its offerings: when the trade unions took over responsibility for tourism in 1936, they offered 50 itineraries on which aspiring Soviet tourists could choose to spend their vacations. In 1938 the trade union tourist organization's first published guide to Soviet tourism listed 64 routes ranging in duration from five days in Moscow or Leningrad to twenty-three days hiking and driving the Ossetian Military Highway.<sup>42</sup>

Sovetskii Turist and the Society for Proletarian Tourism had divided their package tours into three categories. Regional (*kraevedcheskii*) tours acquainted travelers with geography, flora, fauna, and social life in unfamiliar territories. On industrial tours, workers would observe production processes in new settings; and on agricultural tours, tourists would witness the achievements of socialist farming. Agricultural tourism failed stunningly to appeal to Soviet vacationers: in 1932, only 980 tourists chose a collective farm itinerary, just 14 percent of the number planned. In that year, 9,000 tourists joined industrial itineraries (73 percent of the plan), but 27,000 tourists selected a regional tour, 108 percent of the planned traffic. By 1934, when the OPTE published its first brochure, "Where to Go," industrial and agricultural destinations had disappeared as the focus of publicity.<sup>43</sup> Soviet tourists, like their counterparts in Germany and the United States, wished to explore difference, see unfamiliar landscapes, and become acquainted with the variety of their country's attractions, whether urban or rural. Industrial tours were

41. See chapter 2. There were 38,000 package tourists, apparently, in 1932. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398 (OPTE presidium, 1932), l. 8; dd. 19–20 (OPTE provisional board, 1930); NSNM, no. 7 (1932): 6, reports on planned excursion activity for 1931.

42. Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1929 goda*; Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1930 goda*; NSNM, no. 13 (1933): 4; no. 4 (1934): 13; no. 9 (1935): 2; no. 4 (1936): 30; *Trud*, 21 March 1936; *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, 206–212.

43. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398, l. 8; NSNM, no. 4 (1934): 13; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 26 May 1934.

perhaps too specialized or too familiar to be attractive; even proletarian tourists on vacation wanted to be *elsewhere* both geographically and in terms of occupation. While an occasional factory, site of socialist construction, or model farm might be included in a more general itinerary, Soviet package tours would henceforth emphasize the regional tour, acquainting the tourist with the whole complex of sights and culture of the places to be visited.

A tourist who wished to take one of these tours could join a group organized through a trade union, educational institution, or place of work, or he or she could sign up in person or by mail at one of the Sovtur or later OPTE offices. In fact, package tourists in the 1930s tended to belong to one of two groups. Some individuals made an active choice to take a vacation by purchasing a putevka at their own expense, through an office of the OPTE or trade union TEU. Others received a tourist putevka from their trade union or enterprise organization, often as a reward for exemplary work. Trade union central committees obtained these putevki in bulk, along with their allocation of tickets to rest homes and sanatoria; they passed them on to individual enterprises, which in some cases distributed them to “deserving” employees without concern that a tourist vacation might involve rigors inappropriate for the physical condition of the prize-winning worker.<sup>44</sup>

The putevka assigned the traveler to a group of twenty-five to thirty travelers for a particular itinerary; the group would typically consist of individuals and smaller groups combined by the tour organizer. The tour began at the first base of the itinerary or sometimes in Moscow. Meeting their groups on the eve of the tour, organizers gave instructions and assigned responsibilities, as was done with independent tourist groups. As part of the package, Sovtur and OPTE would help to arrange train transportation to the start of the route. This was not included in the price of the putevka, but the tour organization’s logistical assistance helped the tourist navigate the complexity of Soviet rail journeys.<sup>45</sup>

The price of a tour depended on the destination and the means of locomotion. In 1929 a twelve-day cruise on the Volga cost between 64 and 70 rubles, depending on the class of travel, or 5.30 rubles a day for the least well-off tourist. A fourteen-day hiking trip on the Ossetian Military Highway cost from 51 to 58 rubles, again based on income, amounting to 3.60 rubles a day for the lowest-paid traveler. In 1929 the most popular tours ranged in cost from 40 rubles to 95 rubles at a time when the average monthly wage of a Soviet working person was 66.70 rubles (85 for administrators). By 1935 the price of a ten-day trip through Crimea came to 180 rubles, or 18 rubles a day; the average monthly wage had also risen, to 155 rubles, or 225 rubles

44. *Pravila priobreteniia putevok na vsesoiuznye marshruty i v uchebnye al'pinistskie lageri TEU VTsSPS na 1938 god* (Moscow, 1938); *Trud*, 21 March 1936; 6 May 1936; 16 December 1936; *NSNM*, no. 4 (1938): 14; no. 7 (1939): 14.

45. *Sovetskii Turist, Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1930*. Although this was a publication of Sovtur, the mechanisms for packaged tours remained the same under OPTE and TEU.

for administrative personnel.<sup>46</sup> The cost of tourism rose faster than average earnings during the 1930s, putting proletarian tourism increasingly out of the reach of proletarians.

By far the most popular destinations lay in the south, the same mountain and coastal areas that had attracted spa visitors in the imperial period and that offered the most desirable health resort locations to Soviet vacationers. Reflecting on the 1930 tourist season, an OPTE official acknowledged that “the pull to the south” still prevailed: 36 percent of that season’s tourists took one of the Crimean itineraries, and 35 percent chose the Caucasus. Of the nine thousand Caucasus tourists, all but one thousand chose the well-trodden military highways. In other words, 70 percent of Soviet tourists in 1930 followed the Crimean and Caucasus itineraries that accounted for 35 percent of the total possible destinations. The Crimean trips took tourists to the main southern coast cities such as Yalta and Bakhchisarai; variations included hiking trips in the Crimean Mountains, visits to the eastern or southeastern portions of the peninsula, and specialized agricultural or industrial tours. In the Caucasus in 1930, nine routes traversed the military highways. The ambitious itinerary number 51 took more adventurous tourists to the foot of Mount Elbrus; other routes could be traveled entirely by automobile or horse-drawn bus, but hiking through the scenic valleys and ravines was a large part of the experience. For the truly sedentary, itineraries 59 and 60 offered steamship cruises along the coast from Crimea to the Georgian Black Sea port of Batumi. By 1938, these routes had diversified in significant ways. The industrial and agricultural tours disappeared completely, as did specialized itineraries for tourists from Siberia or Ukraine. Only two Caucasus itineraries featured the military highways, but many more tours offered tourists the opportunity to base themselves in one of the coastal resort towns and to take day trips to the surrounding attractions.<sup>47</sup> These packages increasingly emulated the sedentary spa vacation.

After the Crimea and the Caucasus-Black Sea coast, Moscow and Leningrad constituted the third most popular set of destinations, attracting 18 percent of group tourists in 1930. As the capital and nerve center of the Soviet state, Moscow combined revolutionary history, socialist progress, and world culture, and tourists could select their own local itineraries to suit their interests. A 1930 Sovtur guidebook recommended that they include a general city tour on their itineraries, along with excursions to revolutionary museums, industrial enterprises, and art museums. As the reconstruction of Moscow gathered momentum in the first and second five-year plans, tangible attractions of socialist progress, such as the metro and the All-Russian Agricultural Exhibition, came to dominate the Moscow tourist itinerary. For many

46. Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1929 goda*; *Trud v SSSR. Statisticheskii spravochnik* (Moscow, 1936), 16–17; NSNM, no. 9 (1935): 2.

47. NSNM, no. 4 (1931): 8; Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1930 goda*; *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, 206–212.

tourists, socialist Moscow provided their first encounter with electric lights, department stores, and modern transportation. A group of students had written to the Moscow Komsomol in 1926, “We, cultured youth of the twentieth century, the century of radio, electricity, the century of achievements of technology and culture, we have never actually seen these achievements. You might laugh, comrades, if we say that we have never even seen a tram. . . . Please help us to visit Moscow.”<sup>48</sup>

Initially, Moscow accommodated its tourists haphazardly, usually in student dormitories during the summer, but the OPTE had begun planning the construction of a hotel as early as 1930. Designed by the architects I. A. Golosov and D. D. Bulgakov, the House of Tourists belonged to the class of monumental urban construction projects like the metro and the Palace of Soviets. As envisioned in the early planning stages, it incorporated a complex of four large buildings, situated at Smolenskaia Square, where the Arbat intersected Smolenskii Boulevard. (It was later incorporated into a wing of the Russian Foreign Ministry, one of the Stalin skyscrapers built in the early 1950s.)<sup>49</sup> Three nine-story buildings would house a tourist hotel, a restaurant, a theater seating two thousand people, a conference hall, and meeting rooms for tourist clubs and organizations; the main building of twelve stories would include an observation deck overlooking the square. All amenities required by tourists would be provided: tailoring and shoe repair shops, barbers and hairdressers, showers, library, and billiards and game rooms. The ground floor would feature a tourist department store plus parking for automobiles and bicycles. The first nine-story building, with rooms for five hundred tourists but no restaurant, was scheduled to open in 1933, but in fact it was not completed until after the TEU took over the property in 1936. Despite its attractive lobby, lined with palm trees and featuring mahogany elevator cabins, the “first-class hotel” lacked its own restaurant and bath facilities. Resident tourists walked for their three meals a day to a canteen in the Park of Culture and Rest, three kilometers away (later to the Prague Restaurant at the other end of the Arbat), and they washed in public bathhouses.<sup>50</sup>

Even the beaten path, whether to Moscow, Leningrad, or the south, offered many wonders to the thousands of Soviet tourists who had never traveled before. But the tourist organizations also endeavored to promote even more exotic and challenging sites of splendid nature and socialist progress. The Arctic north occupied an important place in the tourist imagination, and as

48. Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1930 goda*; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 9 October 1933; 1 October 1936; 19 January 1935; NSNM, no. 5 (1939): 2; Bergman, *Pervaia kniga turista*, 18 (quote).

49. <http://wikimapia.org/10094328/ru/zdanie-byvshei-gostinitsy-Obshchestva-proletarskogo-turizma-i-ekskursii>.

50. NSNM, no. 4 (February 1930), inside front cover. A drawing of the planned complex, with a monumental column-lined façade on the Smolenskii Boulevard side, appears in *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 17 December 1933; see also *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 22 April 1936; 1 October 1936; NSNM, no. 25 (1932): 15; no. 7 (July 1936): 26.



early as 1929, the Russian Society of Tourists reported receiving hundreds of letters asking it to organize tourist excursions to the polar region. “The north plays for us the same role that America once played,” prompting children and young people to run away from their families in order to realize their dreams of the wilderness. Sovetskii Turist offered three itineraries to the Arctic in 1930, including a thirteen-day excursion from Petrozavodsk to Murmansk and the Kola Peninsula, and the “grand northern” tour, a twenty-eight-day trip by rail and sea, including stops in Arkhangel'sk and Murmansk, visits to indigenous fishing villages, mining sites, and spectacular lakes in the peninsula.<sup>51</sup> The opening of the White Sea-Baltic Canal in 1933 (infamously constructed by prison labor) made the north even more accessible. The 1938 tourist guide featured itinerary number 34, on which tourists could board a ship in the canal port town of Medvezh'ia gora (Bear Mountain) at the northern end of Lake Onega, travel two days along the canal to the White Sea, and continue by train to Murmansk and Kirovsk on the Kola Peninsula. “Arctic tourism” received a boost in 1937 when the TEU chartered the ship *Vologda* to carry large groups of tourists, scientists, and journalists to encounter the north. Special correspondents who accompanied the cruises wrote glowingly about the rigors of weather and the social pleasures of the cruise, on which scientists mingled with shock workers and all contributed their talents to the evening amateur shows.<sup>52</sup>

The tourist organizations also tried to promote other less familiar tourist destinations, emphasizing the attraction of the wild and unpopulated spaces of the Urals, Siberia, and Central Asia. In 1932, the OPTE sent a team of officials to Iakutiia in Siberia to develop routes there, and they opened a new all-union itinerary in Central Asia, with tourist bases in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Ashkhabad. *On Land and On Sea* regularly drew its readers' attention to tourist possibilities away from the familiar routes of the south, and it devoted scant space to the standard destinations. A 1936 issue touted the attractions of Kazakhstan, describing four different itineraries that would acquaint the tourist with the history of tsarist colonization and burgeoning new industries, providing encounters with an enormous variety of landscape,

51. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 13 February 1929 (quote); Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1930 goda*, 175–176. On the economic development of the north and its role in the cultural imagination, see John McCannon, *Red Arctic: Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932–1939* (Oxford, 1998); see also Andy Bruno, “Making Nature Modern: Economic Transformation and the Environment in the Soviet North” (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2011), chap. 2, on the promotion of tourism on the Kola Peninsula.

52. *Puteshestviia po SSSR*, 7–11. The tour was first introduced in 1935. NSNM, no. 9 (1935): 2. On the *Vologda*, Iu. Varankin reported in NSNM, no. 12 (1937): 17–18. Al. Terent'ev contributed a series of dispatches, under the heading “Tourists in the Arctic,” to *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 2 August 1937; 8 August 1937; 10 August 1937; 19 August 1937; 28 August 1937; 3 September 1937. D. Reizer reported on the second sailing of the *Vologda* in *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 15 August 1937; 23 August 1937; 31 August 1937; 3 September 1937; 7 September 1937.



flora, and fauna. Alpinism aficionados could find picturesque mountain landscapes in a fifteen-day tour from Alma-Ata to Lake Issyk-Kul. Tourists to the Urals could choose from thirty-six interesting itineraries, visiting caves, cliffs, rivers, forests, and industrial centers. But *Trud's* Sverdlovsk correspondent lamented that this picturesque region so rich in natural beauty had been ignored by the publicists of the trade union tourist organization: in 1937, only eight thousand people had traveled there, of the reported ninety-three thousand tourists to all destinations. Another *On Land and On Sea* journalist pointed regretfully to the absence of tourists visiting the large number of nature reserves across the Soviet Union, including sites in the Altai and Siberia. In 1935, he noted, Yellowstone National Park hosted 2.5 million visitors; if Soviet tourists could only access adequate information about their own national reserves and if the TEU could provide facilities on the Yellowstone scale, these vast and varied reserves could become regular tourist destinations.<sup>53</sup> The journalist conflated two very different challenges to expanding the Soviet tourist grid: knowledge about where to go posed one obstacle, but the provision of tourism infrastructure off the beaten track proved to be a more insurmountable problem.

The tourist cruise emerged in the 1930s as a distinct and popular form of vacation sightseeing, a hybrid of a tourist itinerary and a comfortable rest home. Cruise advocates emphasized the healing properties of a leisurely journey along the country's major river arteries or along the Black Sea coast: "Sitting on the open deck, breathing the clean air of the river, woods, and meadows, bathing in the river, taking sun baths—all this makes a river trip the most healthful form of rest." As a form of travel, steamers offered more space and comfort than trains, featuring electric lights and steam heating, baths, pianos, radio, salons for table games, quiet corners for reading, and jazz and dancing to the accordion in the evenings. On a riverboat, passengers could sit on the deck and watch the constantly changing scenery come to them, a particularly attractive vacation option for elderly travelers for whom a mountain itinerary would be too strenuous.<sup>54</sup>

Tourist cruises had begun in the mid-1920s along the Volga, when the Moscow health department chartered the river steamer *Zhemchuzhina* for thirteen-day excursions. Sovtur organized its first river cruises in 1928, with an itinerary extending from Iaroslavl' to Samara. River tourists could also travel independently aboard one of the many passenger and postal boats plying the central river systems (such as the ship carrying musicians to Moscow in the 1938 film musical *Volga-Volga*). The river transport agencies added special third-class accommodations in 1928, providing economy tourists

53. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398, ll. 44–45, 33; NSNM, no. 11 (1936): 5–7; *Trud*, 10 July 1938; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, l. 56; NSNM, no. 3 (1940): 10–11, 13.

54. I.I. Fedenko, "Vodnyi turizm," in *Spravochnik-putevoditel' po vnutrennim vodnym putiam SSSR* (Moscow, 1932), 161 (quote); *Povol'zhe: Spravochnik-putevoditel' 1930 g.* (Moscow, 1930), 247; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 4 June 1934; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, l. 50.

with their own dining rooms and showers. The Library of Proletarian Tourism issued a pamphlet for such tourists along the Volga and Kama Rivers in 1930, its schematic foldout maps indicating the major industrial attractions and scenic sights along the way. OPTE and later the TEU would charter boats from the river transport agencies for their package tours, including the new passages along the White Sea Canal after 1933. By 1936 tourists could choose from one of seven so-called floating rest homes, sailing from Gor'kii to various destinations on the Kama and Volga Rivers.<sup>55</sup> The cruise in fact brought "tourism" and "rest" more closely together than any other vacation possibility.

By the end of the 1930s, Soviet tourists could also cruise the Black Sea in comfort. As with river cruises, "the chief pleasure of a sea journey is the wonderful bracing air, the constant changing of impressions and contemplation of the grandiose picture of sea and shore, which one can obtain only on a ship." Oceangoing boats had navigated the Odessa-Batumi route since the late 1920s: vacationers heading to the Caucasus Black Sea coast resorts typically journeyed by train to Odessa and then sailed to their final destination. For 1940, however, the TEU had organized a Black Sea cruise as a trip in itself, aboard the newly outfitted *Adzhariia*, now featuring a concert hall, library, billiards room, photo lab, and tailor. On a ship that had once transported 1,100 passengers along the coast, now only 450 tourists would make a relaxing ten-day cruise from Odessa, visiting all the major attractions along the way in the expert company of a TEU guide. For 1940, the tourist agency announced fifteen sailings for the spring and summer, serving 7,000 tourists.<sup>56</sup> Like the twelve cruise ships commissioned by Germany's Strength through Joy, these journeys by sea evoked modernity, comfort, mobility, and fun, all packaged by the state for the enjoyment of its citizens.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, tourist destinations could be found closer to home, although in desirability they lagged behind the best-traveled routes of the south. "Soviet Switzerlands" abounded in the hills and valleys of central Russia, especially in the regions around Moscow and Leningrad. Trade unions distributed putevki to tourist tent camps in these outskirts, where vacationers could live close to nature, hike, swim, rest, and relax. These local itineraries could acquaint working people with their own region, rich in history, culture, and scen-

55. Fedenko, "Vodnyi turizm," 162; *Volga-Volga*, dir. Grigorii Aleksandrov, Mosfil'm, 1938; *Povol'zhe*, 244; I. I. Fedenko, *Volga-Kama. Karta putevoditel'* (Moscow, 1930); NSNM, no. 10 (1934): 2; N. E. Khristandrov, "Plovuchie doma otdykha i sanatorii," *Voprosy kurortologii*, nos. 1–2 (1938): 83.

56. *Spravochnik sovtoorgflota dlia passazhirov po vsem moriam s prilozheniem putevoditel'ia po kurortam i portam Chernogo i Azovskogo morei* (Moscow, 1928), 101; NSNM, no. 5 (1940): 28; *Trud*, 12 March 1940.

57. Baranowski, *Strength through Joy*. North Americans also flocked to Europe in huge numbers aboard newly inexpensive ocean liners in the 1920s and 1930s, utilizing the excess capacity of wartime troop transports to create a new tourist class of transatlantic travel. Lorraine Coons and Alexander Varias, *Tourist Third Cabin: Steamship Travel in the Interwar Years* (New York, 2003).



A tourist outing to Lake Krylovo in the Moscow countryside, 1940. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 420062. Used with permission of the archive.

ery. In 1939, for example, tourists could choose ten-day itineraries based in Zvenigorod, Moscow's "Switzerland," in Petrozavodsk north of Leningrad, at Tolstoy's Yasnaia Poliana estate, or in a boating camp on the Oka River in Tula oblast. Judging by the persistent criticism in the tourist press, developing local routes ranked low on the list of priorities for tourism organizations, who preferred to hand out putevki on national routes managed by the central TEU apparatus.<sup>58</sup>

Even less ambitious from the standpoint of authentically purposeful tourism, the so-called radial itineraries allowed the tourist to stay in one base for the duration of the tour, "radiating" outward on optional day or overnight excursions. Determined to preserve the purposeful meaning of tourism, officials labeled this type of itinerary "balneological" tourism, an ideal way to recover from nervous stress and overwork without having to find a place in a sanatorium or rest home, but it soon became clear that these tours were nothing more than an alternative way to obtain a scarce spa

58. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 11 June 1937; *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 10 June 1932; *KP*, 11 May 1935; A. Usagin, "Vnimanie mestnomu turizmu," *NSNM*, no. 1 (1930): 14–15; no. 16 (1931): 2–3; no. 25 (1931): 2; no. 4 (April 1938): 2.

vacation, whether for recuperation or pure pleasure. OPTE agents actively marketed radial putevki, serving the unmet demand for places in sanatoria and padding the OPTE's coffers at the same time. Although most of these putevki provided limited five- or ten-day stays at a given base, vacationers could buy them in multiples that would add up to a standard twenty- or thirty-day resort vacation. A "disproportionate" number of putevki, wrote *Trud* in 1936, sent travelers to these stationary destinations. In the peak summer months, stationary tourists constituted as many as 40 percent of all those traveling on OPTE package tours.<sup>59</sup>

Active tourists heaped scorn on these pseudo-tourists, calling them "radiators" and later pajama-people (*pizhamniki*). Satirical articles in the tourism press depicted them as spoiled and privileged members of the Soviet middle class, engineers and their wives who commandeered rooms in the permanent tourist base buildings, leaving real tourists to lodge in leaky tents. They spent "quiet hours" and evenings in the base's club dancing the foxtrot, even while insisting that their health would not permit them to engage in strenuous activities like hiking or overnight camping. They had come to rest and recuperate, not to listen to political lectures or test their physical mettle. The pajama people complained about the noisy comings and goings of proletarian tourists from the road, who arrived at all hours of the night, staying for only short spells. Meanwhile, active tourists bore the brunt of the overcrowding caused by the masses of radial tourists. The trade union tourism organization hoped that its riverboat trips could provide an alternative to the radial itinerary for those "elderly workers" who wanted a quiet vacation away from home, but they were still advertising stationary tours in 1939.<sup>60</sup> Radial tours generated profit for the tourism organizations because Soviet travelers wanted to obtain them, and so the groups continued to offer the kurort vacation disguised as a tourist putevka. The path of least resistance followed the demands of the travel consumer.

Travel abroad occupied a special place in the emerging tourist movement of the Soviet Union. Aspiring tourists deluged the Soviet press with questions about the possibilities of making a foreign journey, inspired perhaps by reports of epic tours publicized in the youth press, such as that of Aleksandr Kniazev and Il'ia Freidberg. In 1924 these two students at the State Institute of Physical Culture vowed to demonstrate the quality of the new bicycles being produced at the Khar'kov bicycle factory by attempting a circumnavigation of the globe. They departed from Moscow's hippodrome for the east on 2 July, traveling through Siberia, continuing

59. *Turist-aktivist*, no. 8 (1931): 42; *Trud*, 30 May 1936; 8 October 1935; *NSNM*, no. 19 (1934): 6.

60. *NSNM*, no. 19 (1934): 6–7, 12; GARF, f. 7576, op. 14, d. 123 (report on qualifying marshruts, October 1955), l. 12; *NSNM*, no. 18 (1931): 14; no. 20 (1934): 10–11, 13; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, l. 51; *Trud*, 10 May 1939.

to China, Japan, Mexico, Latin America, and finally returning to the USSR through Germany and Poland. "All physical culturalists and tourists" of Moscow greeted their return on 6 March 1927, after a journey of forty-five thousand kilometers, including twenty-five thousand kilometers on their bicycles. Both Sovetskii Turist and the Russian Society of Tourists advised hopeful globe-trotters that foreign travel lay beyond their ability to pay, but the organizers planned eventually to sponsor tourist excursions abroad, funded, they hoped, by the hard currency income that would be generated by foreign tourists visiting the Soviet Union.<sup>61</sup> *On Land and On Sea* reported in August 1930 that it had received many requests from individuals and groups inquiring about travel abroad, but the magazine suggested that the foreign currency needed for such trips was better spent for imported machinery and technology. Besides, the Soviet Union offered unlimited domestic tourist possibilities, whether to scenic, cultural, or economic destinations. This philosophy that tourism begins at home paralleled the "see America first" campaign in the United States, but the Soviet goal of acquiring knowledge through travel did not exclude a broader internationalist vision, in principle if not in practice.<sup>62</sup>

Two notable foreign tourist journeys helped to imprint the lure of foreign travel in popular tourist consciousness. They also remind us that the rise in xenophobia associated with the 1927 war scare and the 1928 trial of "bourgeois wreckers" did not translate into a complete cessation of foreign travel.<sup>63</sup> In November 1930, 257 "best of the best" Soviet shock workers received the prize of a lifetime, a month-long cruise around Europe aboard the brand-new Soviet-built ship, the *Abkhaziia*, on its maiden voyage from Leningrad to its commercial destination, the Black Sea.<sup>64</sup> These purposeful and privileged travelers would "see with their own eyes" the state of the capitalist crisis of the West as well as gain production knowledge from workers abroad. The shock workers, having observed the idle shipyards of Hamburg and the residential areas of Hamburg, Naples, and Istanbul, carefully recorded everything they saw in their notebooks, which became the basis of their published eyewitness accounts. The trip received extensive coverage in the daily as

61. *KP*, 5 March 1927; 8 March 1927; 15 March 1927; A. A. Bulgakov, ed., *Velosipednyi turizm* (Moscow, 1998), 21; *KP*, 16 December 1926; 6 February 1927; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 28 March 1929; *KP*, 29 November 1927; GARF, f. 2306, op. 69, d. 1826 (Russian Society of Tourists, December 1928–January 1929), ll. 28, 33; GARF, f. A-2306, op. 69, d. 2068 (correspondence on two tourist societies, April–July 1929), l. 17.

62. *NSNM*, no. 15 (1930): 2; Shaffer, *See America First*.

63. See Michael David-Fox on the political climate surrounding international ties in this period in "From Illusory 'Society' to Intellectual 'Public': VOKS, International Travel and Party-Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period," *Contemporary European History* 11, no. 1 (2002): 14–28.

64. *Korabl' udarnikov: Sbornik ocherkov uchastnikov pervoi zagranichnoi ekskursii rabochikh udarnikov na teplokhode "Abkhaziia"*, ed. M. Lias (Moscow, 1931). The trip was originally scheduled to begin on 15 September, but the ship did not embark until 10 November. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 20, l. 17.

well as the tourist press; the filmmaker who accompanied the travelers later produced a nine-reel documentary on the tour, with special emphasis on the visible signs of collapsed economies in Germany and Italy: slum neighborhoods and repeated images of shop windows plastered with “Marked Down!” signs. A second cruise in July 1931 took shock workers aboard the newly built *Ukraina* to Hamburg, England, and Italy, with a similar mix of factories (Metropolitan Vickers in Manchester, Fiat in Turin), neighborhoods (the brothel district in Hamburg again), tourist attractions including the India Museum and Karl Marx grave (woefully uncared for) in London, and resort hotels at Rapallo and Portofino.<sup>65</sup>

The promise of group travel abroad signaled by these cruises, however, did not further materialize in the 1930s. In 1932 the OPTE approved in principle a plan to send “vacation” cruises around the Baltic Sea without stopping in any foreign port, but there is no evidence that such sailings took place. Instead, the Soviet citizen imagined a cosmopolitan tourist world through extensive and regular coverage of foreign tourism destinations in the pages of *On Land and On Sea*, through which virtual tourists could visit exotic Madagascar, the Amazon, and Alaska as well as Paris, Lourdes, the Swiss Alps, and Chicago.<sup>66</sup> Exceptionally lucky individuals might also win a foreign tourist trip through the lottery sponsored by the voluntary society to support the chemical and aviation industry, Osoaviakhim. The fitter I. Fokin won a world tour in 1934, reporting on his travels through Europe and the United States with letters to *Vecherniaia Moskva*.<sup>67</sup> A year later, the engineer Okhramchuk turned his one-ruble lottery ticket into an eighty-day European trip, traveling extensively through Germany, France, and England. Like the *Abkhaziia* tourists before him, he studiously observed the “achievements of European

65. *Korabl' udarnikov; Pervyi reis*, silent film, dir. G. Gricher, RGAKFD, no. 9735; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 1 (1931): 34; *NSNM*, no. 30 (1931): 3–7. Histories of tourism published before perestroika omitted any mention of these first Soviet package tours abroad. The first reference I have found is in B. A. Kvartal'nov and B. K. Fedorchenko, *Orbita "Sputnika": Iz istorii molodezhnogo turizma* (Kiev, 1987), 25. The *Abkhaziia* trip is mentioned in Grigorii Usyskin, *Ocherki istorii rossiiskogo turizma* (Moscow, 2000), 117, but not in an earlier book that is otherwise very similar, V. V. Dvornichenko, *Razvitie turizma v SSSR (1917–1983 gg.)* (Moscow, 1985).

66. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398, l. 5 (presidium meeting 15 July 1932); *NSNM*, no. 21 (1932): 15; no. 7 (1933): 14; no. 2 (1931): 20; no. 10 (1930): 20; no. 23 (1930), inside back cover; no. 1 (1931): 13; *NSNM*, no. 16 (1931), inside back cover; no. 9 (1940): 27–28. Virtually every issue contained articles about tourism or expeditions in other parts of the world. Similarly, illustrated magazines like *Nasha strana* also covered the entire world even in the late 1930s.

67. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 10 July 1934, 12 July 1934. An advertisement in a 1932 river guidebook announced that Osoaviakhim would award 92 European trips, and 166 trips to “major foreign cities,” along with 720 trips around the Soviet Union, as well as 28 automobiles and tractors. The society to support water transport also advertised a lottery in this guide, with winners receiving one of “75 foreign sea voyages.” The ocean liner illustrated in this ad was much grander than the *Abkhaziia* that took the first Soviet tourists abroad. Fedenko, *Spravochnik-putevoditel' po vnutrennim vodnym putiam*.



technology,” but in his free time he visited museums and other attractions of the Western capitals. In that same year, a group of yachtsmen sailed to Sweden via Helsinki and Copenhagen (“the Finnish capital was significantly more dirty than Leningrad in 1926”). We know that these yachtsmen were debriefed upon their return, and so presumably were Fokin, Okhramchuk, and other individuals who had traveled abroad: international travel created knowledge that could be shared both privately and publicly, but it increasingly generated suspicion.<sup>68</sup>

Reports of tourist travel abroad disappear from the public record after 1935, and the charter of the trade union TEU, confirmed in November 1937, mentioned nothing about foreign travel. In the late 1930s, Soviet border policy began to reflect fear of foreign infiltration rather than the opportunity to spread socialism abroad. Inturist continued to receive foreign tourists and their hard currency, but the influx of these tourists peaked in 1936 at near 25,000, dropping to 14,000 in 1937 and further to 7,500 in 1939 and 1940.<sup>69</sup> Cultural and diplomatic exchanges also declined in the increasingly xenophobic climate created by mounting political arrests and show trials. Spending on domestic tourist travel continued to increase in the second half of the 1930s, but it now firmly supported the principle of tourism in one country. Tourist travel beyond Soviet borders would remain only a hopeless dream or a clandestine privilege until the mid-1950s.

### Bad Trips: The Group Tourist Experience

Tourist organization brochures and illustrations painted the package tours as a stylish and comfortable mix of sightseeing, education, and rest, the thick descriptions of the itineraries promising a wondrous and well-planned travel experience. Direct accounts of the package trips are extremely rare for the 1930s, but the tourist agencies monitored complaints, and these unhappy encounters provide a picture of both expectations and reality.

For public consumption, at least, these tourists had a grand time, as did the lucky patients who wrote back to home newspapers about their sanatorium or rest home vacations. Writing to her factory newspaper in 1936, Skorokhod shoemaker Pania Fedorova reported on her tour of the Caucasus, noting the sights of Moscow (Lenin’s mausoleum and the metro) and the pleasures of the Park of Culture and Rest, although she had to prolong her stay in Moscow because of the difficulty of getting an onward train ticket to Sochi.

68. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 27 March 1935; NSNM, no. 21 (1935): 22–23; TsGA SPb, f. 6276 (Leningrad Trade Union Council), op. 277, d. 139 (conversation with yachtsmen, October 1935).

69. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 1–2; Salmon, “To the Land of the Future,” 103; Heeke, *Reisen zu den Sowjets*, 48. By the late 1930s, Inturist was increasingly marketing its underutilized deluxe hotels to a domestic consumer clientele. See advertisements for Kislovodsk and elsewhere in *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 4 July 1937; 10 October 1937; 7 March 1938; 14 March 1938; 22 October 1938; 17 May 1939; 14 September 1939; 19 October 1939.



They “merrily” journeyed south, and having arrived in Sochi, her group was looking forward to a long bus trip to Krasnaia Poliana, high above sea level, and then hiking down to the sea at Sukhumi. Another group sent their greetings from the road, also commenting on the sights of Moscow, and announcing their intention to hike 126 kilometers through the passes and ravines of the Caucasus, whose “beauty we cannot describe in a letter. Our horizon, of course, has been expanded several times over.” Vania Makarov and Ania Karachinskaia wrote from their journey on the Baltic-White Sea canal: they had reached the starting point and were about to begin their cruise. Greeting their fellow workers who had chosen to spend their vacation at the factory dacha, Vania and Ania chided them for missing out on the kind of remarkable trip they were experiencing. Another group of ten sent a similarly enthusiastic letter from the Crimea, outlining the trip they were about to begin, the towns they would visit, and the sights they would see.<sup>70</sup> Although the sense of excitement and wonder in these letters is palpable, it is significant that they were sent before the completion of the trip, and the itinerary described was based on the guidebook rather than personal experience. The many reports received directly by the tourist organizations suggest that these tours did not always proceed as smoothly as the guidebooks or fan letters might promise.

Soviet tourists faced an anxiety common to many tourists even today, fear of the unknown.<sup>71</sup> The *Abkhaziia* shock workers had left the port of Leningrad to the martial airs of brass bands but also with some trepidation. As the lucky travelers boarded their trains to Leningrad, spouses and children remained weeping on the platforms, “sending us off as if we were going to the front.” Other shock workers worried that their absence from their factories would endanger the fulfillment of the five-year plan—were they in fact deserting their posts?<sup>72</sup>

More pressing dissatisfaction emerged from the inability of the OPTE and TEU to deliver the organized tours they promised. The first tours following the formation of the OPTE in 1930 produced particularly dispiriting complaints, fostered by the organizational shortcomings of the tourist agencies, a low culture of service, and the mounting food supply crisis caused by the disastrous collectivization campaign. Group 278, having completed its Volga cruise in June 1930, compiled a detailed list of grievances about the tour, whose abnormalities had begun from the start. Their printed putevki stated that the cruise would follow the itinerary Moscow-Nizhnii Novgorod-Astrakhan-Moscow, but when the travelers embarked in Moscow, they discovered the cruise would extend only as far as Saratov, well north of the

70. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 15 July 1936; 3 August 1936 (quote); 13 August 1936.

71. Koshar, *German Travel Cultures*, 8; Igor Duda, “Workers into Tourists: Entitlements, Desires, and the Realities of Social Tourism under Yugoslav Socialism,” in *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism (1950s-1980s)*, ed. Hannes Grandits and Karin Taylor (Budapest, 2010), 53; Kopper, “The Breakthrough of the Package Tour,” 67–92.

72. *Korabl' udarnikov*, 14–15.

promised end point. When they queried the trip leader, Kholin, about the route, he allegedly replied, "Go where you want, it's none of my business." Having been told they need not bring their own bed linens, the travelers discovered that the steamship would not provide them either. Kholin himself had brought eleven sets of linen for the trip, hardly adequate for the thirty members of the group. The cultural activities aboard the cruise also drew criticism. The ship offered no library, no table games, and no information on the sights of the Volga or the five-year plan. When they approached the city of Samara, the tourists asked Kholin what they should see there, and he replied, "There is nothing to see in Samara. . . . Look at the mud: there's a lot of it in Samara. There are two museums, an antireligious museum with two rooms and a museum about the local region. Like all museums of this type, they aren't interesting." After such an endorsement, the tourists said they no longer cared to stop off here. But the chief problem concerned the lack of food. The tourists' ration consisted of three hundred grams of bread a day; meals were served late and slowly and came with just two glasses of tea a day. The manager of the ship's buffet claimed he was not warned that the ship would carry thirty tourists, and so he had not procured the necessary provisions; Kholin insisted that his funds for food were also limited. The ship captain also declined responsibility for food. As a result, tourists had to buy food at their own expense, and those who had no extra money went hungry. Four of them left the trip early for this reason, departing the ship in Saratov and making their own way back home.<sup>73</sup>

Another group of tourists never succeeded in boarding their assigned riverboat. M. A. Shestakov wrote to *Vecherniaia Moskva* about his ill-fated 1932 cruise aboard the steamer *Vairam-Ali*. His putevka indicated that the cruise would leave Nizhnii Novgorod on 24 July, but with no other particulars, he and his group of ten did not find the departure point until after the boat had sailed. The local OPTE officials advised them to catch up to their ship on a postal boat; the passengers themselves sent a telegram to their ship asking it to wait for them in the river city of Kazan', but when they arrived, there was no ship in sight. Some tourists with money continued to try to reach their cruise ship, but the rest had grown tired of chasing and returned home. My "vacation," concluded Shestakov, consisted of not sleeping for six nights, spending seventy rubles, and having a hot breakfast and dinner only once in this time. A reporter for *Vecherniaia Moskva* endured an equally disappointing cruise: aboard the steamer *Dekabrist* he asked his waiter what kind of fish was available for dinner. "Pork or veal," replied the waiter. "How about sturgeon?" "It's there in the water."<sup>74</sup> The campaign to promote "cultured

73. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 33–35.

74. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 8 August 1932; the OPTE blamed the insurance fund that distributed the putevki for the failure to inform travelers about departure times. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398 (OPTE provisional board, 1932), l. 60b.; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 29 July 1934.

service” at this time might have led Soviet tourists to expect good manners, on vacation as well as at home, but service personnel reportedly paid more attention to themselves than to the tourists.

Central tourist facilities performed somewhat better than the Volga steamship cruises. Tourists from Vladivostok visiting Leningrad praised the attentive service at the OPTE base on Moika Street and the food in the canteen, but they asked for a dining room closer to the base and a barber on the premises. By 1932, bases in Moscow, Leningrad, and the North Caucasus were receiving generally good marks for their service and food. Farther from the center, though, food supply problems, bedbugs, and problems of overcrowding continued to spoil the experiences of the Soviet package tourists. At Zelenyi Mys on the Black Sea, tourists were so unhappy with the food that they went home early, throwing away their paid putevki. Tourists condemned the Batumi base as a “bedbug factory.”<sup>75</sup>

The fact that tourists reported and the OPTE’s journal publicized these complaints indicated that Soviet tourists possessed certain expectations about the quality of their experience. Moreover, tourist organizations took note of their expectations and attempted to address them, if not necessarily with great success. The politics of the complaint book would become more refined in the 1950s and 1960s, but even in the 1930s, this process provided some measure of consumer demand and preferences, some idea of how Soviet tourists imagined their good life. Reviewing its first season of operation in 1936, the trade union tourist authority examined the written comments (*otzyvy*) left by tourists at their bases. Since only a minority of the responses expressed dissatisfaction, the TEU decided that “most tourists” were happy with their experience. Of 83,680 package tourists in 1936, 950 recorded comments about the quality of excursions, of which 78 (8.3 percent) were “negative,” complaining primarily about transportation difficulties to and from their destinations. Cultural activities drew less enthusiastic reviews. One-quarter of tourists who left comments about activities (759 in all) expressed unhappiness with cultural offerings, especially in Moscow because of the high cost of theater tickets. One-quarter of comments about lodging (621 in all) registered discontent, especially in the Black Sea coastal areas where tourists slept in tents. Food drew the most remarks of all (1,188), of which 17 percent complained about food preparation and service. Such complaints, especially about bad transportation experiences, persisted into 1937, but by then service at some tourist bases had begun to improve. Tourists still grumbled about the boring menu selections and poor quality of the food in many locations, but Volga tourists now expressed satisfaction. Officials reported that the package tours generally drew favorable reviews,

75. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 19, ll. 46–46ob; d. 398, l. 4ob.; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 8–9 (1932): 29; NSNM, no. 10 (1931): 2; no. 17 (1934): 16; no. 20 (1934): 13; no. 21 (1930): 16; NSNM, no. 10 (1931): 2; no. 4 (1932): 15; no. 26 (1931): 8; no. 9 (1932): 15; nos. 28–30 (1932): 24; *Turist-aktivist*, nos. 11–12 (1932): 44.

although they regretted that tour leaders failed to connect excursion themes to contemporary political events.<sup>76</sup> Tourists, however, like vacationers in rest homes, may have appreciated the opportunity to escape the climate of fear brought about by the arrests and trials of an escalating number of friends, family, and coworkers.<sup>77</sup>

### Who Was the Proletarian Tourist?

The proletarian tourism movement had begun in the 1920s on the principle that socialist tourism would offer a superior form of rational and knowledge-producing leisure travel. Tourism activists also assumed that it would bring the greatest benefits to those segments of society—production workers and agricultural workers—that had been unable to undertake leisure travel before the revolution. These same activists, however, also recognized that traditional tourism held few attractions for proletarians, that a tourism vacation remained alien to those social strata for whom the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions had been created. *Vecherniaia Moskva's* correspondent acknowledged in April 1930 that industrial workers still showed a very weak desire for tourism, and that the Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions was “not, in fact, proletarian.” Most of the country’s “proletarian tourists” consisted of student youth, not production workers. On package tours, society officials acknowledged that at most, 20 percent of travelers came from the true proletariat. Factory workers needed to be encouraged and taught to engage in this formerly bourgeois pastime: hence the creation of factory-based cells that would agitate locally for the spread of tourism among the proletariat. But even in the OPTE, the largest number of members turned out to be students and factory white-collar workers. Of Moscow’s 300 OPTE cells in 1930, only 129 were located in factories, and production workers constituted only 58 percent of the society’s membership. In the proletarian citadel of Red Presnia, workers numbered just 39 percent of OPTE members. In setting its goals for mass expansion of proletarian tourism, the society dictated that 80 percent of Moscow’s future membership should consist of production workers, 60 percent in the country overall.<sup>78</sup> These arbitrarily round figures corresponded closely to the proletarian targets for rest home and sanatoria vacationers, a goal that had little basis in social, cultural, or economic reality.

Beyond propaganda, the OPTE applied a flexible pricing scheme to interest production workers in tourist travel. Putevki came in three price categories, depending on the social status of the tourist, and only workers and students with the lowest incomes could receive the half-price railway

76. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 47–48, 11–12.

77. See Leder, *My Life in Stalinist Russia*, 121.

78. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, 24 April 1930; *Biulleten'*, nos. 7–8 (1930): 9; NSNM, no. 3 (1930): 20; no. 8 (1930), inside front cover.

discounts.<sup>79</sup> Putevki given as rewards for exemplary work also favored production workers, as with the highly publicized shock workers aboard the *Abkhaziia* in 1930 and the *Ukraina* in 1931.

To inculcate tourism appreciation, the society designed tours for different social strata. "In working out concrete plans for summer tourism," ruled the OPTE organization bureau in 1932, "it is necessary to differentiate our approach to different strata of laboring people. Youth, adult male and female workers, married workers, peasants [*izbachi*], and teachers need different forms of service, different itineraries, different modes of travel and excursions. Beginning and experienced tourists each need their own approach." Organizers believed that production workers would be most attracted to the industrial itineraries that emphasized the exchange of production experience, and they stipulated that 85 percent of participants on these tours should be workers. Tours to the "capital of the socialist nation," Moscow, tailored specialized itineraries for specific groups. Textile workers would study the problem of cotton in the five-year plan at the Polytechnical Museum and visit several textile factories along with general excursions to the Tret'iakov Gallery and Darwin Museum. Metalists would visit machine-building plants and the State Agency for Machine Imports in addition to the standard tours. Women workers would see exhibits on the protection of mothers and infants and tour day-care centers and a bread factory; at the Tret'iakov Gallery, they would observe the portrayal of women in paintings.<sup>80</sup>

By the end of the first five-year plan, however, the concern about the social composition of Soviet tourists had begun to wane. In 1932, in fact, the OPTE decided that it could drop the three-class pricing system for its tours since it expected that 90 to 95 percent of tourists on its summer routes would consist of shock workers and their moral equivalents, technical personnel and schoolteachers. It still proposed targets for its various types of tours: 85 percent of tourists on the industrial tours would be workers, as opposed to 70 percent for the standard sightseeing routes.<sup>81</sup>

More troubling than the low demand by workers for Soviet tourism was the prevalence of those from the wrong class, who gravitated toward the soft and lazy radial tour by the sea. Women, allegedly mostly from this middle class, constituted 52 percent of the tourists on package tours in 1930 but represented only 5 percent of the members of the OPTE. While all Soviet people might benefit from sedentary vacations in a rest home or sanatorium, real workers were said to yearn for more authentic tourist experiences. One of these was the old metal fitter Ivan Akinfievich on a radial putevka in Gagry

79. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398, l. 80. Groups of at least fifteen and rural schoolteachers paid the lowest price, followed by individuals who were trade union members or teachers; "other citizens" paid the highest rates. Sovetskii Turist, *Marshruty ekskursii na leto 1929*, 149.

80. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398, ll. 59, 81. On content of the tours, see *Marshruty proizvodstvennykh ekskursii po SSSR; Ekskursii v Moskvu* (Moscow, 1930), 5–8.

81. TsGA SPb, f. 4410, op. 1, d. 398, l. 81.

on the Black Sea. Admiring a young family traveling the coast by bicycle, he regretted that he would return home having seen nothing of the majestic scenery of the Caucasus.<sup>82</sup>

By the middle of the 1930s, the OPTE seemed to be failing in its mission to expand the proletarian component of socialist tourism, and this became another cause of the transfer of the tourism business to the trade unions. The trade union paper *Trud* had reported the results of a survey among industrial workers that revealed their desires to spend their vacations traveling to see the notable sights of the Soviet Union: the Caucasus, the Dnepr Dam, or the Urals. But few workers received this opportunity, even after the creation of the trade union Tourist-Excursion Authority. Ordinary workers could not afford to purchase putevki with their own limited funds. In 1937, the average price of a ten-day trip, exclusive of transportation, was 215 rubles, and the average wage for all those employed in industry, both white-collar and blue-collar workers, was 253 rubles a month. Few workers could afford to spend a month's salary on a tourist vacation: although the TEU advertised the sale of tourist putevki to individual consumers, this market did not include factory workers. If workers wanted to travel, they had to hope to receive a putevka through their trade union as a reward for good work, but even this opportunity remained limited. In 1937, individual trade unions distributed their tourist putevki primarily to white-collar employees, just as they had with vouchers for health spas. Only 20 percent of tourist coupons went to workers (and one half of one percent to collective farm workers). As before, noted the TEU, the largest number of Soviet tourists were teachers—26 percent in 1937, followed by white-collar workers (20 percent), students (16.5 percent), and technical personnel (11 percent.)<sup>83</sup>

Despite the unequal allocation of such tourist vouchers, distinctions among tourists according to social position received little emphasis in the tourism press. Nor did gender ratios cause explicit concern. In the late 1920s, to be sure, some activists feared that women might be excluded from tourism because of their perceived frailty. Accounts in *On Land and On Sea* often featured groups of women (especially in each year's March issues, dedicated to International Women's Day), but the proportional distribution by sex did not receive public attention. The best people, Soviet people, participated in tourism: shock workers, Stakhanovites, Komsomol members, soldiers, party members, geologists, and engineers. As *On Land and On Sea* reminded an inquiring reader, there was no such specialization or occupation as "tourist." Anyone could be a Soviet tourist who preferred active travel to passive rest.<sup>84</sup>

82. NSNM, no. 3 (1930): 20; no. 4 (1930): 1; *Turist-aktivist*, no. 8 (1931): 42; *Trud*, 30 May 1936, 8 October 1935; NSNM, no. 19 (1934): 6, 12; nos. 5–6 (1931): 2.

83. *Trud*, 12 March 1935; Janet G. Chapman, *Real Wages in Soviet Russia since 1928* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), 109; *Puteshestviia po SSSR*; *Trud*, 16 August 1938; 23 June 1939; 28 March 1940; 21 May 1941; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 8, l. 22.

84. See, for example, the feature on Stakhanovite-tourists in NSNM, no. 8 (1936): 15; no. 4 (1937): 2.



### “To Fail—Meant Death”

According to official TEU policy, all Soviet people should become tourists, and tourism was the best form of rest. But the small independent group remained the best of the best. Here one could find authentic *proletarian* tourism, whether the tourist was a metal fitter or a mathematician. The authentic proletarian tourist developed a Soviet individual self—self-disciplined, self-actualizing, self-reliant—through cooperation with the group and voluntary submission to the trip regime. The independent tourist learned to take initiative, prepare, exercise leadership, and practice self-restraint and discipline. The group offered the safety of numbers, comradeship, and the pleasures of teamwork. Yet there existed a tension between the goal of self-actualization and the practice of small group travel. If a proletarian tourist had truly mastered the discipline and regime of touring, then he or she should also be capable of touring alone, possibly the ultimate test of the tourist’s skills. The much-despised tourist tramps may also have seen themselves as ideal Soviet subjects. Consider the story of Gleb Travin, who bicycled alone around the perimeter of the USSR from 1928 to 1931.

As Travin recounted in a short memoir published in 1975, the idea of a trip around the USSR began to take shape in his mind with the arrival of a Dutch cyclist in his hometown of Pskov in 1923. Thereafter, the young Travin trained assiduously so that he could perform a similar feat of bicycle daring.<sup>85</sup> His father, a forester, had taught him outdoor survival skills, and Gleb managed to acquire a secondhand bicycle to train for a journey around the world, eastward from Pskov and finishing in Moscow. He even learned Esperanto in hopes that he could converse wherever he went, and he had already ordered his visiting cards for the trip that was to begin in 1925, but army service intervened. Instead of cycling across North America and Africa, he found himself in Leningrad, where he continued to prepare for his journey, studying geography, zoology, botany, and photography and training physically through swimming, weight lifting, boat racing, and cycling. At some point, his bicycle dream turned away from a trip around the world to a journey along the entire border of the Soviet Union. Upon his demobilization in 1927, he requested permission to move to Kamchatka in the Far East so that he could test his

85. Gleb Travin, “Bez skidki na vremia,” *Vokrug sveta*, no. 11 (1975): 59. Adolf de Groot was probably one of many thousands of young Europeans who took their bicycles to the roadways in search of adventure; although he posed for pictures and gave an interview to the newspaper *Pskovskii nabat*, his feat went unrecorded in the annals of Dutch cycling. A. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek s zheleznym olenem: Povest' o zabytom podvige* (Moscow, 1965), 39–40; personal communication from Otto Beaujon, chairman of Oude Fiets (Veteran Bicycle Society, Netherlands), 9 October 2003. In his published account, Travin did not acknowledge the widely publicized global circumnavigation of the cyclists Kniazev and Freidberg (see text at note 61), whose exploits received considerable press attention in 1925. In a 1977 interview with the newspaper *Sovetskii sport*, however, Travin admitted that he had wished to follow their example. See [http://www.tct.ho.ua/travin/travin\\_interv'iu.html](http://www.tct.ho.ua/travin/travin_interv'iu.html).

cycling skills in unfamiliar surroundings. Here he found employment as an electrician at a power station construction site, and he continued to train. "And having determined that there was no place that a bicycle could not take me, I headed off from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatka to Vladivostok."<sup>86</sup>

Travin's route would take him forty thousand kilometers along the perimeter of the country, passing through major cities and tiny settlements in Siberia, Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus. He stayed well clear of the western border, however, traveling north from the Crimea to Khar'kov to Moscow and then to Leningrad by October 1929, a year into his journey. From Leningrad, his path headed north to the Arctic, where he spent nearly two years cycling, sometimes on the frozen sea, crossing rivers, enduring avalanches, recuperating from injuries, and dwelling with polar explorers, local inhabitants, and Russian settlers. In September 1931, he arrived at a cultural base in Chukchi territory, the northeasternmost reach of the Soviet Union. Still plying his electrician's skills, he repaired the local radio transmitter and sent a message back to Kamchatka: "The journey around the USSR is completed. Gleb Travin."<sup>87</sup> But since he could not get a ship home, he continued by bicycle, returning finally to his starting point on 24 October 1931, three years after he had begun.

The story of Travin's journey reads like a first-class adventure yarn, and Travin himself emerges as an intrepid one-man-against-the-elements hero: precisely the kind of solo wanderer so loathed by the Society for Proletarian Tourism. He carried very little with him besides his bicycle: the clothes on his back, a few tools, a supply of dried meat and chocolate, a rifle that he acquired in Arkhangel'sk, an album in which he collected official stamps from the points along the way, and a thick belt on which copper letters spelled out his name, Gleb Leont'evich Travin; this could serve to identify him if he met misfortune along his route. He also carried a printed card that identified him as "Bicycle traveler Gleb Travin."<sup>88</sup> In Dushanbe, he stopped at the local newspaper to ask for a translation of his card into Tajik, and the closest that could be found for this unfamiliar object was *shaitan-arba*, or devil wagon. Travin would be taken for a devil again on the western shore of the Arctic island Novaia Zemlia. In the midst of a storm, he had given up on reaching a settlement and had camped on the ice. During the night, a crevasse opened up, the water freezing around Travin's sleeping body. In the morning he managed to hack himself free with the knife kept in his belt, and he hauled himself and his bicycle to a Nenets settlement. Realizing that gangrene had set in, he proceeded to amputate his toes right in the hut where he had taken shelter. When he showed no pain during this operation, the women in the hut ran out screaming that he must be "Keli!"—an ice devil. Later, still recovering,

86. Travin, "Bez skidki," 59.

87. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek*, 188.

88. In its attempts to discourage brodiashnichestvo, the OPTE proposed a ban on the private printing of such cards. *Biulleten' turista*, nos. 4–5 (1930): 6.

he found shelter aboard the icebreaker *Lenin*, but he had to hide the extent of his injuries so that the naval doctor would not detain him.<sup>89</sup>

Travin seemed to eschew civilization, although he was no hermit. In other ways, he demonstrated mastery of all the traits celebrated by independent tourism: preparedness, self-reliance, ingenuity, and skill. He noted that he did not need to carry food because he could always find a meal in a peasant cottage; in the north he could catch fish with a bicycle spoke and hunt birds, fox, or bear with his rifle. At one point, he shot a polar bear for meat and its skin, only to discover it was a mother with two cubs. (He had been given a dogsled at this point after having been seriously injured in an ice cave-in: he spent two months in a northern collective farm settlement, recovering from his injuries and fending off the local matchmakers.) He added one cub to his larder and carried the second one live in reserve, but he soon grew attached to the little fellow, Mishutka, and it became a pet. The Chukchis, he related, were as amazed by this friendship between a man and a bear, an animal they considered holy, as by his bicycle. But Mishutka met an unhappy end: in another settlement, he had playfully spilled some soup Travin was drinking, and Travin punished him by locking him in a shed overnight. He had given the cub a bearskin to keep him warm, but he mistakenly gave him his mother's fur. He found the cub dead in morning, killed, Travin believed, by grief. Travin vowed then that he would never again kill a polar bear and later insisted that because he respected nature, nature had allowed him to survive.<sup>90</sup>

What motivated Travin to make this journey? As he recounted later in life, he drew his joy from the movement toward the goal he had set for himself. "Every day I took an examination. If I passed, I would remain alive. To fail—meant death." Publicity meant nothing to him, and he did not seek it out. At a time when polar aviators were drawing press attention for their exploits north of the Arctic Circle and traveling tramps were gaining fame for the length of their solo journeys around the country, Travin charted his own personal journey without fanfare or notice. He would later assert that he kept silent because of the "negative connotation of the term 'tourist,' associated with leisure and holiday-making, even an 'independent tourist.'" Travin himself had relied on the French adventure tale *Without a Penny in your Pocket* in preparing for his own tour, but he did not seek to capitalize on his experience by sharing his adventures with the reading public.<sup>91</sup>

Travin's journey would sink further into obscurity when in 1937, as the purges raged, his sister burned the notes he had sent her in the course of his

89. Travin, "Bez skidki," 56–58.

90. *Ibid.*, 61.

91. *Ibid.*, 60. On the fascination for the north, see McCannon, *Red Arctic*. The real increase in polar exploration and attendant publicity did not begin until 1932, but there was plenty of exploratory activity going on along the northern USSR border at the time of Travin's tour. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek*, 212, 41. The *Penny* reference is probably to Louis Bousсенard, *Sans le sou* (Paris, 1895). Bousсенard's travel adventure stories were popular in Russia through the twentieth century, according to library listings.

travels, “just in case, to avoid trouble” from prying police eyes. Not until the late 1950s did a journalist covering stories in the Far East begin to hear rumors about the amazing exploits of Gleb Travin. The writer Aleksandr Kharitonovskii apparently met Travin and heard his story, from which he reconstructed a narrative, first published in Kamchatka in 1960 and later in an edition of twenty-five thousand in Moscow. This revised work, *The Man on the Iron Reindeer*, appeared in 1965 at a time when tourism was beginning to take on massive proportions in the Soviet Union. Like many transcribed personal narratives of this time, the account has been substantially embroidered with imagined dialogues and amplified with extensive geography and history lessons relating to the territories Travin passed through. Yet it contains photographs that Travin must have provided, and it seems to be based in part on other documentary evidence. The book ends with a series of testimonials from eyewitnesses who read the 1960 account of the trip and volunteered their stories.<sup>92</sup> Stranger than fiction, implies the book, the journey of Gleb Travin was a true story. Travin would tell his own version, much abbreviated, ten years later, in an article in the travel magazine *Around the World*.

Everything we know about this journey, consequently, is filtered through these two questionable sources, one a highly embellished popularized travel account, the other a personal narrative, “as told to” a journalist, published forty-five years after the fact. Yet such documents can combine with our other knowledge about Soviet tourism, whether in independent groups or by rugged individuals, to convey a sense of the private geographic imaginings of the solo cyclist Travin. In 1975 Travin could say that his heroes were Faust (he of the thirst for knowledge), Odysseus (who splendidly bore the blows of fate), and Don Quixote (known for pointless service to beauty and justice): not one a proletarian or a part of a collective. (The mathematicians P.S. Aleksandrov and A.N. Kolmogorov, floating down the Volga at the same time as Travin began his bicycle tour, also found inspiration in *The Odyssey*, which was the only book they brought to read on their tour.) In contrast to those of the model independent tourist, Travin’s goals were profoundly personal and inner-directed: in tracing the borders of the Soviet Union, as he wrote, he was testing himself, every day his life was on the line. He identified with the romantic gaze, as he explicitly admitted later in life. “I was a romantic! They should have put me on the Turksib or the White Sea Canal,” referring to the two big construction projects of that era. Nor were his knowledge-gathering desires so closely linked to encountering his own country: his initial ambition had been to circle the globe on his bicycle, and in 1932, having just completed his arduous journey around his own country, he applied unsuccessfully for

92. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek*, 198. The original and shorter version by A. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek s zheleznym olenem: Povest’ o zabytom podvige* (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatka, 1960), was sent as a gift by Travin to astronaut John Glenn, inscribed “From one world traveler to another.” Glenn donated the book to the Ohio State University Library. All citations here are from the 1965 edition.

permission to finally realize his globe-cycling dream.<sup>93</sup> In fact, Travin the cyclist appears to have had much in common with hundreds of thousands of young men around the world (but how many women?) who were crazy to travel, whether with a stated purpose (thirty thousand kilometers on foot) or just to drift where fate would take them (like Odysseus). Hoboes in the United States, cyclists like Adolf de Groot, and the many vagabonds who were denounced in the Soviet tourist press all represented very similar phenomena.

Yet however much Travin yearned to break free of the borders of his one-sixth of the globe, he was also a Soviet man, and not only did his tour of self-reliance physically retrace the limits of the geographic space in which he lived, but his encounters also repeatedly tied him to the nation-building project of the USSR. Sharing knowledge constituted an important ritual of Travin's tourist experience, as it did for officially approved tourists in the 1930s. In his account the Nenets and Chukchi figure as prominently as the polar bear and the ice caves. When Travin made his polar journey, much of the country was still unmapped, and he frequently crossed paths and shared information with explorers, geologists, and geographers who were officially charged with fixing the new national geography. He learned about the customs of the many different peoples of the Soviet Union—discovering, for example, that in Kazakhstan it was an insult to refuse to drink sour milk. He himself brought knowledge to others, giving geography lessons in the Arctic settlement of Russkie Ust'e because there was no teacher in the school. When he requested permission (and a bicycle) for his travel around the world, he emphasized the value to the USSR that his trip would produce: "To go abroad on a foreign bicycle would be shameful. I hope to properly demonstrate the Soviet bicycle before the foreign masses both in central places and in distant regions of America, Africa, and Western Europe." Travin's story eventually became known, commemorated to this day in an exhibit in the Pskov city museum, but how many other young men of his generation followed their own independent tourist programs, without groups, without permission, without a medical regimen but in search of a very similar experience of self-knowledge and discovery?<sup>94</sup>

By the end of the 1930s, the parameters of Soviet tourism had been established. It offered both pleasure and purpose, and depending on one's own preferences, it could be experienced through rigorous participation in independent tourist groups or in the relative comfort and security of organized group travel. It could be ascetic, emphasizing experience and knowledge. It could be material, providing nourishing food, warm baths, and a comfortable touring car. Adventure and pleasure constituted different sides of the Soviet

93. Travin, "Bez skidki," 58; Kolmogorov, "Memories," 148; Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek*, 212, 209.

94. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek*, 72, 209; Travin, "Bez skidki," 60–61; <http://culture.pskov.ru/ru/persons/object/161>.

good life: if authentically proletarian tourism could be experienced only through the rigors of the independent group (or by the unheralded exploits of solo travelers like Travin), the tourist with the yellow suitcase also found joy and wonder in natural landscapes and the socialist-built environment. "In sightseeing, all men are equal before the sight," writes MacCannell.<sup>95</sup> In the end, the more capacious vision of tourism represented in the 1920s by the joint-stock company Sovtur had triumphed. Travin rejected the tourist label because of its association with leisure and holiday making. Most Soviet tourists preferred comfort over adventure, and the successive tourism administrations found the package tour easiest to provide: the path of least resistance found willing and enthusiastic takers among both officials and the public. By the end of the 1930s, *proletarian* tourism remained attractive to a small minority, and it was proletarian no more in either composition or form. *Soviet* tourism, instead, came to offer a relatively inexpensive, tourist-class opportunity for urban women, students, officials, and other members of an upwardly mobile emerging elite to experience a pleasurable spa vacation. But Soviet tourism, too, like its proletarian rival, emphasized purpose as well as pleasure.

The good life of Soviet tourism also gave Soviet citizens the opportunity to select their own path of exploration, their own route through the nation. Yet whether the tourist journey was hard or soft, guided or autonomous, Soviet tourism helped to instill values that came to be identified with a particularly socialist form of vacation travel. In their own accounts, Soviet tourists in the 1930s celebrated the way in which tourism offered self-knowledge and physical recuperation. The tourist regime taught every tourist to be a self-reliant atom in the collective molecule. "Let them laugh," as the group of women from the Moscow textile factory asserted. "We accomplished our task."

Soviet tourism, as it developed in the 1930s, reveals the origins of "Lefort's paradox" elaborated by Alexei Yurchak. Expected to cultivate a collectivist ethic, the Soviet citizen became at the same time an independent-minded individual.<sup>96</sup> By following the strict rules for proper Soviet tourism, the proletarian tourists could achieve authentic Soviet self-realization. Traveling away from the masses on pristine mountain glaciers or rowing along the Volga took them on their own personal journeys of discovery, but at the same time they were performing their duty to state and society to improve their health, their work abilities, and their minds.

95. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 146.

96. Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 11.



## chapter four

# Restoring Vacations after the War

In 1940, as war engulfed Western Europe, the Soviet press lauded the new comforts available to Soviet tourists and vacationers. While Europe burned, Soviet citizens could select a cruise on the *Adzhariia* along the Black Sea coast or take a seat in an open touring car for a breathtaking ride through the Caucasus Mountains. The network of sanatoria, rest homes, and tourist bases continued to expand, and opportunities for vacations away from home became available to more citizens than ever before. The geography of Soviet tourism also expanded significantly, as the forcible annexation of western territories brought new destinations into the Soviet fold. Reminding its readers of Lenin's fondness for the Carpathian Mountains, *On Land and On Sea* included features on western Ukraine and Belorussia just months after the Nazi-Soviet Pact allowed the Red Army to extend Soviet borders westward. One month after the annexation of the three Baltic republics in August 1940, the magazine featured the tourist possibilities of this new addition to the Soviet land, featuring smiling Latvian youth in national costume on its cover.<sup>1</sup>

The German invasion of 22 June 1941 put an end to Soviet leisure travel, of course, and over the next four years, the war would reduce many Soviet vacation facilities in Crimea and the Caucasus Mineral Waters to rubble. The much-vaunted annual paid vacation was annulled for the duration of the war. Vacation facilities away from the fronts were converted to hospitals for military and civilian casualties. Leisure travel came to a halt as all means of transport were mobilized for moving troops, refugees, evacuees, and later prisoners across the "unbounded space" of the Soviet land.

Victory came with the surrender of the last German armies on 8 May 1945. Troops, refugees, evacuees, returnees, and prisoners of war would continue to monopolize the means of transportation across borders and within the Soviet Union, but on 1 July 1945, to great fanfare, the Supreme Soviet announced that the annual paid vacation had been reinstated.<sup>2</sup> The trade

1. *Trud*, 17 January, 29 January, 12 March, 20 March, 28 March, 30 March, 10 April, 18 May, 14 August, 24 August, 10 September, 3 December, and 19 December, all in 1940; 27 April 1941; *NSNM*, no. 11 (1939): 6–7; no. 12 (1939): 10–11; no. 3 (1940): 12–13; no. 4 (1940): 3; no. 8 (1940): 10–11; no. 9 (1940): "Sovetskaia pribaltika," 3–8, 9–17.

2. *Trud*, 17 July 1945.



Souvenir photograph of a couple at a central NKVD rest home in Tsikhis-Dziri, Georgia, 27 May 1941.

unions received orders to make all efforts to rebuild and restore the damaged and destroyed leisure facilities so that Soviet war invalids and workers could begin to repair their weary organisms and recover the strength expended in the defense of their homeland.

The postwar years offered new opportunities to expand and reshape not only Soviet vacation opportunities but the entire direction of the Soviet project. For many citizens, the end of the war kindled an optimism that the people would now be rewarded for their sacrifice not only in war but also in the intensive industrialization effort that had preceded it and made victory possible.<sup>3</sup> The party-minded writer Vsevolod Vyshnevskii had offered a glimpse of this new world in a 1944 speech:

3. Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945–1957*, trans. Hugh Ragsdale (Armonk, NY, 1998), 16.

When the war is over, life will become very pleasant. A great literature will be produced as a result of our experiences. There will be much coming and going, and a lot of contacts with the West. Everybody will be allowed to read whatever he likes. There will be exchanges of students, and foreign travel for Soviet citizens will be made easy.<sup>4</sup>

The wartime destruction offered opportunities to rethink the direction and organization of the socialist vacation.<sup>5</sup> But the victory over fascism could also serve to validate the Soviet system as it had developed by the end of the 1930s. The right to rest remained hallowed in postwar propaganda, but how would that rest be organized in the years of reconstruction, carried out amid continuing economic challenges and the emerging Cold War? Was the prewar structure to be re-created, with heavy emphasis on the aristocratic standard of monumental and medically lavish facilities in the south? Could sporting tourism gain the upper hand (and support of the trade unions) over pajama touring, especially given the continuing confrontation with hostile powers? Or was there room for a middle ground of comfortable, nonmedicalized vacation? This last was already becoming the norm by the end of the 1930s, expressed in the demand for *putevki* and vacation time in the summer, in the south, and on the shore.

Initially, recovery dominated policy decisions. Both the tourism and the health resort agencies struggled to rebuild their facilities and clienteles in the postwar years, and it was not until 1950 that some semblance of normality returned to opportunities for annual vacations at rest or in motion. But the trade union organizations gave priority to restoring the expensive infrastructure of rest homes and health spas, consigning tourism to a second-class status that ignored the possibilities it offered to develop more economical leisure travel. Both tourism and health spas remained embedded in the trade union structure, and access to vacations continued to be linked to the workplace. In these protean postwar years the government would decree the expansion of these facilities and would boast of the millions of rubles to be spent on the vacations of laboring people, but the structure of the expansion would be dictated and constrained by the costly patterns already set in the prewar years.

Yet within this restoration of the 1930s vacation edifice, subtle changes occurred in the early 1950s that presaged the more dramatic social developments

4. Quoted in Alexander Werth, *Russia: The Post-war Years* (New York, 1971), 99.

5. Recent work on this period includes Juliane Fürst, ed., *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (London, 2006); Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, NJ, 2001); Juliane Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Postwar Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford, 2010); Juliane Fürst, Polly Jones, and Susan Morrissey, "The Relaunch of the Soviet Project, 1945–64: Introduction," *Slavonic and East European Review* 86, no. 2 (2008): 201–207; Stephen Lovell, *The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR 1941 to the Present* (Chichester, UK, 2010).

usually associated with the years of “de-Stalinization” after 1953. Consumer comfort gained new prominence, and professional expertise acquired new authority. The medical profession asserted primacy in the postwar administration of vacations, and professionalism in vacation services, such as food preparation, gained unprecedented status in planning and execution. We can also see in this period the rise of a new social stratum, the intelligentsia, who not only furnished the expertise but simultaneously became the most skilled consumers of the annual vacation, whether in health resorts or on tourist trails. During the course of the 1930s and late 1940s, members of this new leading class had come to dominate Soviet society and to expect rewards for their service to the state.<sup>6</sup> Some had risen from lowly social roots through the process of Soviet industrialization and urbanization.<sup>7</sup> Others had been the offspring of a prerevolutionary elite who managed to use their cultural capital to reproduce a position of privilege in the new order.<sup>8</sup> By the beginning of the 1950s, they had begun to utilize the opportunity to secure leisure travel as one of the signifiers of their prestige and social position.

## War and Recovery

The decreed reinstitution of the regular vacation on 1 July 1945 celebrated the return to normalcy in the aftermath of war with its suffering and sacrifices. Trade union health and tourist authorities scrambled to organize bases and itineraries for the first batches of vacationers. The central trade union newspaper *Trud* announced that 750,000 working people would enjoy a much-deserved vacation by year’s end, and they called attention in August to the departure of thirty tourist groups bound for destinations in the Caucasus.<sup>9</sup>

Recognizing that not all deserving workers could immediately regain their right to rest, Soviet authorities stipulated that among the spa and rest home vacationers planned for 1945, priority should be given to invalids from the war, pregnant women and nursing mothers, workers in hazardous branches of work, and “others.” Mothers and injured veterans constituted newly privileged categories of entitlement, outranking even shock workers, an acknowledgment of the human costs of the war. Soon, however, the familiar “very best production workers” rejoined the A-list, along with demobilized soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Prewar experience had already shown how difficult it was to

6. Vera Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge, 1976), analyzes the “big deal” between the regime and the managerial middle class that traded political loyalty for material perquisites.

7. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge, 1979).

8. Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA, 1995); Vladislav Zubok, *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia* (Cambridge, MA, 2009); on the intelligentsia as a social group, see also Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, NY, 2008).

9. *Trud*, 7 July 1945; 7 August 1945; 22 September 1945.

10. *Trud*, 16 August 1945; 25 January 1946.

enforce hierarchies of entitlement; priority was easily granted, real access more elusive. Expanding the privileged categories at this moment recognized the war contributions of the mass of the Soviet population without actually providing the promised access: this was, in modern terminology, an “unfunded mandate.”

Tourist authorities began cautiously, limiting their initial efforts to reconstructing the handful of the most popular destinations from the prewar period: Moscow, Leningrad, Crimea, the Caucasus Black Sea coast, the northern Caucasus, and Transcaucasia.<sup>11</sup> Although the central tourist authority pledged to provide tours of Moscow to demobilized soldiers, officials reported that most of the initial tourists on long-distance routes consisted of teachers, students, engineers, and scientific workers.<sup>12</sup> As before the war, the right to rest remained a commodity to be rationed to a few for the good of the whole, but in fact it went only to those few—urban intellectuals—who possessed the social capital to take advantage of these opportunities.

Planning for the return of the vacation had begun well before the final defeat of the German armies in early May 1945. The Tourism-Excursion Authority of the Central Trade Union Council received orders on 24 April 1945 to mobilize six of the biggest regional administrations for the revival of tourism that very summer. The assignment included developing itineraries that would expose tourists to the history of the war as well as the familiar sites of socialist construction, natural reserves, and cultural monuments. The trade union center approved new spending to train excursion guides, rebuild tourist infrastructure destroyed in the war, and reopen the Tourist Equipment Factory, which would put tents, rucksacks, and other supplies in the hands of the expected new flow of tourists. Central health spa authorities, despite the pledge to send 750,000 citizens to rest homes and sanatoria in 1946, continued to rely on local initiative to provide these opportunities, exhorting local trade union committees and even individual enterprises to rebuild damaged structures and in particular to expand the subsidiary farms that could provide health institutions with local food for their patients and vacationers.<sup>13</sup> This decentralized approach might have constituted a new model for the management of the Soviet economy. Nikita Khrushchev would attempt something similar late in the 1950s, but in the immediate postwar years the attempt foundered.<sup>14</sup>

By 1948, the health authorities' bootstrap approach—urging individuals to solve their own vacation facility problems—had reverted to a more familiar pattern of central control and supply. Unable to comply with central

11. *Trud*, 7 July 1945; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 24 (materials on tourist camps, 1945), l. 44.

12. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 24, l. 24; *Trud*, 7 August 1945. On veterans as an entitlement group, see Mark Edele, *Soviet Veterans of the Second World War: A Popular Movement in an Authoritarian Society 1941–1991* (Oxford, 2008).

13. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 24, ll. 44, 115; *Trud*, 28 September 1945.

14. On reform efforts in this period, see Julie Hessler, “A Postwar Perestroika? Toward a History of Private Enterprise in the USSR,” *Slavic Review* 57, no. 3 (1998): 516–542.



"Tourism is the best rest." Poster by Mariia A. Nesterova (1897–1965) (Moscow: Gosizdat Iskusstvo, 1946), issued in an edition of two hundred thousand.



directives on their own, individual units appealed to the center for direction and above all for the funds with which to implement central decrees. Local officials now appeared plaintively at central conferences, asking for a hand-out to fulfill their responsibilities. This pattern would be replicated throughout the coming decades. Economic shortages, which deteriorated into actual famine conditions by 1946–47, provided many reasons for the failure to act locally. Shortages of capable managers in the aftermath of the devastating war also contributed to the stalled recovery of the vacation economy.

The challenges were enormous. Many of the structures of sanatoria and rest homes had been damaged during the wartime occupation, some beyond repair. Surviving structures were often commandeered by other agencies with more clout, and tourist and health authorities struggled to reclaim them. Of sixty-two prewar sanatoria in Crimea, only ten were still functioning after the peninsula's liberation, and these were vulnerable to requisition by agencies more privileged than the trade union health administration. As late as 1946, electricity had still not been restored in Yalta, and not a single beach functioned. Odessa's once-thriving kurort network with eighty sanatoria also suffered greatly during the war.<sup>15</sup>

The overwhelming response of local institutions to these conditions of scarcity was to petition the center to solve their problems and to rail against it when it did not respond or responded inappropriately. At a May 1947 conference of heads of health resorts, director after director reported on their miserable situations. Some had been cut off by the central kurort supply agency, and they begged to be included in the central allotments. Others complained that the ministries to which they belonged did not allocate the funds they needed to rebuild. A conference of directors in Sochi produced even more pointed complaints: the Textile Workers' Sanatorium had attempted to establish its own farm to feed patients, but the central kurort administration failed to supply seed until the growing season was already over. But others complained about excessive oversight that inhibited their ability to solve their own problems. They petitioned the director of the trade union kurort administration to "show more confidence in us, give us more freedom, don't tutor us on every trifle."<sup>16</sup> For enterprising managers, the state was too rigid; for the weak, it was too poor.

The central authorities blamed the problems on certain ineffective managers in their periodic editorials in the newspaper *Trud*, and they always praised by name the handful of sanatoria and rest homes that worked well.<sup>17</sup> The newspaper also regularly provided surveys of readers' letters—"signals from below"—about the shortcomings in the right to rest. Some Soviet

15. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21 (Sochi sanatorium directors' conference, 24 October 1947), l. 18ob.; d. 177 (materials on Crimean health institutions, 1946), ll. 11, 1; d. 78 (national trade union conference of resort and rest home managers, December 1949), l. 165.

16. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 20, ll. 97 ob., 16; d. 21, ll. 10, 4 (quote).

17. Examples in *Trud*, 14 May 1946; 26 July 1946; 16 November 1946; 11 June 1947; 15 May 1948.

citizens gratefully reported on exemplary vacation experiences in these first hard years of wartime recovery. The factory newspaper at Moscow's Hammer and Sickle plant published a series of letters from workers on vacation in summer 1946. From Kislovodsk came a report of good and nourishing meals, daily mineral baths, therapeutic air, and magnificent scenic views. A first-time restorer in Crimea extolled a town unlike any he had seen before, with alleys of palms and pines, wonderful air, and a fruit orchard that fed him apricots and plums. "The time spent by the seashore will long remain in my memory" was a refrain that permeated the letters sent home or written in local comment books.<sup>18</sup>

For most recipients of a *putevka* to a rest home or sanatorium in the late 1940s, however, the experience was memorable for its lack of comfort, service, medical attention, and recreation. A composite vacation experience went something like this. Vacationers arrived at the station nearest the rest home or sanatorium after a long and tiring train ride, but there was no one to meet them or guide them the final kilometers to their destination, so they hauled themselves there on foot carrying their small suitcases. Then they waited for several hours to be checked in and assigned their beds; there were no baths or showers to remove the journey's grime. Dozens of resters shared a sleeping room, which was dark, dirty, cramped, and drafty. Everything remained in the suitcase under the bed; there were no shelves, cupboards, bedside tables, or chairs to sit on. The windows lacked curtains, the floor lay uncarpeted, and the roof probably leaked.

Although vacationers had undergone strict medical inspections at home in order to demonstrate their eligibility for this vacation, there was little attention paid to medicine after they arrived. A doctor did not appear until the second week of the stay, and she probably prescribed either an inappropriate course of treatment or one that could not be administered because the baths did not work and there was no therapeutic equipment. Vacationers could not even engage in morning exercises because the grounds had all been planted in vegetable gardens to feed the staff.

Vacationers might have been weighed when they arrived, and their goal would be to gain a few kilograms, but the dining experience was as grim as the sleeping room. Crowded conditions meant that resters ate in three shifts, with long lines and long waits; there were not enough dishes or eating utensils for all. The variety of foods was minimal, and food often spoiled because of the lack of refrigeration. One director in 1947 criticized the monotonous supply: "sturgeon, sturgeon, sturgeon, no herring, and sturgeon again."<sup>19</sup> (At least someone was catching it from the Volga.) The same diet was served every day, and the quantities were substandard. Because of the crowding, resters ate too fast and spoiled their digestion.

18. *Martenovka*, 25 May 1946, 18 July 1946.

19. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21, ll. 4ob., 5.

The ideal was for the rest of the day to be spent in relaxation and recreation, but there were no games or sports facilities, and the grounds were so ragged, unkempt, and filled with trash that it was hazardous to walk outside. There were no walkways, no benches, certainly no flowerbeds or decorative shrubs. A river might run by, but the beach was overgrown and the stairs down the bank beyond repair. The staff members were more interested in their own survival and saw their jobs as opportunities to secure access to food at the vacationers' expense. Some were kind and caring, but many more were rude and indifferent to the needs of the vacationers. The evenings dragged on with nothing to do: the film projector might be broken or show only old films, the radio did not work, and there was no one to organize amateur concerts, lectures, or games. If there was a library, it lacked an assortment of books, and there was no comfortable place to sit and read. And if a vacationer wanted to register a complaint, the mandatory complaint book was missing or locked away. Many tried to leave early, preferring spartan dormitories to a Soviet rest home, but even this was difficult because train tickets could not be secured in advance.<sup>20</sup>

Vacationers registered their dissatisfaction loudly and in public in letters to the authorities and the press. Their complaints testified to the kind of vacation stay that Soviet citizens expected and the kind that had been the publicized norm before the war. But now they had become bolder in their insistence on comfort and care. Their ideal vacation experience made the rest the focus of care, the object of medical, cultural, and culinary attention. The combination of new landscapes, the picturesque seaside or mountain views, and the unusual abundance of comfort and medical care were meant not merely to provide a respite from the routine of work but to transform the Soviet vacation spot into a magical therapeutic wonderland.

Quite clearly, the full-service vacation was more accessible for some Soviet citizens than for others. In Sochi, although officials denied it, a class system prevailed in the allocation of food supplies. "As a rule, there is a division of sanatoria by Kurorttorg [the central food supplier] into sanatoria of special designation, sanatoria of a higher type, and sanatoria of the Central Trade Union Council," insisted one head doctor at a 1947 conference on Sochi health resorts. The head of the food supply authority, Serebrovskii, acknowledged that he had received a list of eighteen sanatoria that were to be supplied differently from the others and allotted the best selection of products. Even if Sochi had emerged as the exemplary center of Soviet vacation health benefits, and although Serebrovskii insisted that "every patient gets

20. This description is based on comments from the following sources: GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 20; d. 77; *Trud*, 1 September 1945; 9 December 1945; 16 July 1946; 26 July 1946; 22 May 1947; 16 July 1947; 19 September 1947; 2 August 1949; 7 September 1949. (One sign of the leanness of these years was the paucity of any kind of reporting about vacations or tourism in *Trud* in 1948.)

the same attentive and sensitive attitude,” there, too, some vacationers were more equal than others.<sup>21</sup>

The restoration of the vacation system in the Soviet Union reflected the same economic constraints as those suffered in the rest of the country.<sup>22</sup> Yet by 1950 the worst of the economic effects of the famine of 1946–47 had been overcome, and vacation officials could set their sights not only on restoration but on the overdue expansion of the right to rest. The new theme in articles about vacations in *Trud* became the amount of money the government was spending in support of this right. Each spring, news stories on the “beginning of the kurort season” applauded the numbers of newly expanded or reopened sanatoria and rest homes.<sup>23</sup> Individually, sanatorium and rest home directors reported on the increased number of beds, patients served, medical therapies performed, books in the library, number of courses (and number of choices) in the meals served. By 1952 a report from the Sochi sanatorium group noted that the cost of food had declined since 1950, and the quality had improved: vacationers could expect increased availability of fruit, vegetables, chicken, fish, dairy products, and sweets.<sup>24</sup>

The “pleasant life” envisioned by the writer Vyshnevskii implied an understanding that laboring people did not live by bread alone, and the system devoted new efforts in 1950 to raise the quality of service provided to the nation’s deserving vacationers. Here too Soviet officials reprised the drive for “cultured service” that had begun in the 1930s.<sup>25</sup> A campaign designated as the “all-union review” encouraged staffs in all rest homes and sanatoria to collaborate on how better to serve their customers and to file reports on what they had accomplished.<sup>26</sup> Acknowledging that the vacation experience began at the station, staffs reported on how they met resters and transported them by bus, greeted them warmly upon arrival with glasses of hot tea, and

21. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21, ll. 4ob., 11ob.

22. Donald Filtzer, *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge, 2002); Donald Filtzer, *The Hazards of Urban Life in Late Stalinist Russia: Health, Hygiene, and Living Standards, 1943–1953* (Cambridge, 2010).

23. *Trud*, 13 July 1949; 7 September 1949; 8 April 1950; 29 August 1950; 15 May 1948; 17 April 1949; 12 April 1950; 10 April 1952. Each summer, a “review of letters” would enumerate the shortcomings still remaining and call the Kurort Administration to account.

24. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 77; f. 9493, op. 3, d. 78; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 576 (conference on the all-union review, March 1950), ll. 4, 16, 25–28; 44; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1783 (trade union reports on the all-union review, 1950); d. 768 (rest home medical reports, 1950); d. 141 (conference of kurort and rest home managers, September 1952); Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv goroda Sochi (GAGS), f. 5, op. 1, d. 79 (Sochi sanatorium group report, 1951), l. 12. The cost of a Sochi putevka in 1947 had been 7,360 rubles; this had come down to 3,769 by 1951 (ll. 11–12).

25. Randall, *Soviet Dream World*; Hessler, *Social History of Soviet Trade*.

26. *Trud*, 18 February 1950; 1 April 1950; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 576, l. 80. A very similar campaign took place in the Yugoslav tourism industry in 1950. See Duda, “Workers into Tourists,” 33–68. The Festival of Britain in 1951 also sought to stimulate the economy through tourist travel to the festival, as publicity on its fiftieth anniversary in 2011 proclaimed.



Exterior view of the entrance to the rest home for miners of the Moscow coal basin, Bobrik-Gora, Moscow oblast, 1950. Photograph by Chenrunov. Note the flowers and fenced pathways, part of the 1950 campaign to beautify rest home facilities. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0171015. Used with permission of the archive.

courteously assigned them to their rooms. Linen tablecloths and napkins graced the dining room tables. Outdoors, fences and benches received new coats of paint, and hundreds of thousands of flowers and shrubs were planted in the course of the review. Doctors did their part by spending more time with patients, attentively writing down their medical histories so that the proper treatment regime could be prescribed.<sup>27</sup> As in 1945, when trade union health authorities had briefly encouraged individual and local initiative, under the 1950 review the best initiators were harnessed to the improvement of service on an all-union scale. This had been the purpose of Stakhanovism and socialist competition in 1930s. What was new in 1950 was the application of incentives to the service sector in mobilization campaigns where the goal was pleasure, not production.

27. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1783, l. 88; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 576; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 2012 (central review commission conferences, 24 March 1950; 20 April 1950); d. 1761 (Krasnodar review commission materials, 1950); d. 1748 (Moscow region review commission materials, 1950); d. 1738 (Crimean review commission materials, 1950). Many of these reports came illustrated with photographs.

Decentralization and lack of administrative control make it difficult to estimate the scale of the postwar health vacation enterprise. For 1945, *Trud* reported that 400,000 Soviet citizens had received sanatorium vacations, and 1.1 million had gone to rest homes. These figures appear to be exaggerated. By 1952, health places fell under several jurisdictions: the Ministry of Health accounted for 114,000 beds in 1948, and the trade unions controlled 120,000. In that same year, trade union officials planned to distribute vacation putevki to between 1.5 million and 1.87 million Soviet working people, which would have meant 12 vacationers for every trade union bed; thus to accommodate everyone they would have had to operate at full capacity year-round.<sup>28</sup> In reality, few locations could accommodate vacationers in all seasons, and local reports suggested that both rest homes and sanatoria filled (and overfilled) their capacity only in the summer months of July and August. By 1950, the bed stock in sanatoria and rest homes had grown to 383,000, and the plan for 1950 called for 2 million vacationers, a more modest ratio of 5 for every bed. For 1952, trade union authorities announced they would provide 2.8 million putevki to sanatoria and rest homes. *Trud* contended that the trip to a vacation spot was now an “ordinary occurrence” for Soviet people, but the population in 1951 was 181.6 million: therefore, only 1.5 percent could receive official vouchers.<sup>29</sup> Vacations in fact were far from ordinary, and in general, reporting stuck to examples rather than aggregates: Soviet readers could learn that “last year 1,380 workers, engineers, and staff from our factory received putevki to rest homes and sanatoria.” They even learned the names of a select few but would not know how representative these were.<sup>30</sup> Publicity about vacations reminded people that the opportunity existed “for all,” but it did not reveal the sober extent of scarcity. In this respect, the provision of vacations continued the practice of the 1930s: for most Soviet citizens, the idea of an annual vacation was more promissory than real.

### Tourism: Mountain Roads or Seaside Rest?

Under such conditions of scarcity, the low-cost tourist vacation might have offered better opportunities for a quick relaunch of Soviet “vacations for all.” In August 1945, the head of the trade union’s central tourist authority, N. M. Rogovskii, gave a confident interview to *Trud* about the revival of tourism activities, pledging the restoration of damaged hotels and tourist bases and reopening of the popular long-distance package tours to Crimea and along the

28. *Trud*, 19 January 1946; 7 February 1948; 26 February 1948; 5 March 1948; 15 May 1948.

29. *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1956 godu. Statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow, 1957), 275; *Trud*, 20 April 1950; 13 April 1952; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1973 godu. Statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow, 1974), 642, 644.

30. Example from *Martenovka*, 17 May 1952.



military highways in the Caucasus. Groups had left from Moscow to explore the unbounded Soviet expanse in the spring and summer of 1945.<sup>31</sup> But the effort to restore tourism to its 1939 level quickly stalled in the face of competition from the more prestigious spa and rest home vacations.

At its peak in 1939, the tourist authority had managed a network of 164 tourist bases, but by the end of the war, only 45 of these remained operational, with just under 5,000 spaces for tourists. Tourism suffered not only from wartime destruction but also from a continuing competition for property. The much-publicized Moscow House of Tourists, with its central location on the Arbat, had been requisitioned by the Central Trade Union Council in 1938 in exchange for a more remote location on Moscow's northeast periphery, Sokol'niki Park. During the war, even this Sokol'niki location had first served as a hospital and was then converted to a rest home for expectant mothers. Tourists choosing itinerary number 1, the five-day tour of "Moscow the capital of the USSR," had no place to stay. Leningrad's prewar "full service" tourist hotel, with spaces for 850 visitors, had been totally destroyed, and another tourist base had been requisitioned by the city's procurator. Throughout the 1940s, the central council fought a running battle with other agencies for the return of property to be used for tourism.<sup>32</sup>

Nor did the tourist authority fare better with respect to access to food supplies, staff, or critical equipment like tents and rucksacks. The Ministry of Trade refused to allocate food rations to tourist bases, which affected not only tourists but the staff meant to serve them. Central planners, moreover, stipulated that tourist excursion leaders and cultural organizers would receive salaries of only five hundred rubles a month, compared with one thousand rubles for those who performed the same jobs in health resort excursion bases; tourism officials complained that it was impossible to recruit competent personnel under such conditions or to retain them once they were trained. The single Tourist Equipment Factory, managed by the tourist authority, presented an optimistic five-year production plan for tents, rucksacks, boots, sleeping bags, and canoes in 1946, but its capacity fell far below demand. The authority was also continually thwarted in its efforts to secure buses and automobiles to transport its tourists, so many routes could not actually function.<sup>33</sup>

By 1948 tourism officials admitted that this best form of rest had failed to regain its prewar status. Regional tourist authorities, charged with organizing tourist visits, had been revived in Moscow, Leningrad, the North Caucasus,

31. *Trud*, 7 August 1945; 22 September 1945.

32. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 167 (reports on tourist bases for the 1950 season), l. 9; d. 24, l. 7ob.; d. 39, ll. 52, 107, 37, 146, 172, 180–181, 88; d. 179a (central TEU reports for 1936–1951), ll. 11–12, 17–18.

33. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 39, ll. 108, 96; d. 193 (reports on tourist bases for the 1951 season), ll. 15–16; d. 24, l. 115; d. 69 (conference on mass tourism and all-union itineraries, 10 June 1948), ll. 9, 23; *Trud*, 22 September 1945.

and Georgia in 1945; in 1946, authorities were established in the newly Sovietized republics of the Baltics and Transcarpathia. Crimea did not return to the roster of active tourist destinations until 1947, and Ukraine not until 1950. Tourism had disappeared from the pages of the central press, complained officials: *Trud* published nothing about tourism between September 1945 and March 1948, and only in September 1949 did an editorial appear criticizing the failure of trade union organizations to properly provide for the tourist exploration of the vast native land. Economic scarcity explained only part of the problem, complained tourism activists: the truth was that neither trade unions nor physical culture authorities considered tourism an activity worth caring about. One of the founders of the proletarian movement, N. Adelung, concluded in 1948 that tourism had collapsed because of official indifference. As late as 1953, activists (Adelung among them) continued to complain that the Central Trade Union Council refused to support tourism.<sup>34</sup>

Debates over tourism in the late 1940s and early 1950s echoed the terms of the initial conflicts between rugged proletarian tourism and the vacation-oriented package tours of Sovetskii Turist. In the frugal postwar years, veterans of the proletarian tourism movement saw an opportunity to rehabilitate the vision of mass, voluntarist, enthusiastic grassroots tourism that had provided the initial model for the Society for Proletarian Tourism. They talked about the importance of creating local cells and clubs to spread by word of mouth the allure of the tourist vacation. If only they could revive *On Land and On Sea*, they insisted, they could reach those millions of travelers who wanted more than a rest home vacation. They aspired to nothing less than the kind of conversion experience reported by first-time tourist and schoolteacher Raisa Sergeevna Kareva, who wrote about her 1949 stay at the tourist base in the Caucasus: "I came here without any special desire or interest, all I wanted was to spend some time in the south. But the result turned out differently. At first we were not much interested in activities of a tourist nature, but after lessons in rock climbing, the stories of groups returning from their trips irresistibly pulled me to the march, to the mountains, to confront their difficulties." Some called for the revival of an independent tourist society to make tourism a movement once again and not a service (or enterprise) of the trade unions.<sup>35</sup>

To enthusiasts and propagandists, mass tourism meant self-reliant, self-propelled, and patriotic leisure travel, a vacation that would strengthen the body and the spirit, reinforce habits of teamwork and comradeship, and provide unforgettable impressions of the majesty of nature. Millions of Soviet citizens desired to engage in this fascinating and enlightening travel around the country, editorialized *Trud* in 1949. As in the 1930s, the task of organizing hundreds and thousands of independent tourist collectives was assigned to the Central Committee on Physical Culture and Sport, with its network

34. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69, l. 12; f. 7576, op. 14, d. 63 (tourism section conference, May 1953), ll. 57, 68–69, 87, 136.

35. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 117 (tourist base comment books, 1949), l. 18; d. 69, l. 210b.



Weekend excursion in Zvenigorod, Moscow oblast, 1947.

of sports societies organized at the level of the factory and enterprise. These groups would proselytize, organize, and train the hardy and adventurous through local weekend excursions and on annual long-distance trips through Soviet forests, lakes, and mountains. Such tourism was now mass in the sense that its leadership came from below, from the volunteer instructors and group leaders who organized training sessions and advised on trips. Each summer, a few thousand such independent tourist groups made their own way through mountain and seaside routes: in 1948, for example, the Kazbek tourist base on the Georgian Military Highway itinerary reported it had served 232 independent tourists and 990 on organized group tours. But shortages of equipment, training, and information continued to constrain the mass potential of such independent tourism. And just as in the 1930s, sports societies cared little for their tourism responsibilities. “They consider tourism a ‘third-class’ sport.”<sup>36</sup> Tourists remained orphaned, without resources or consideration.

Circumventing the physical culture organization’s studied indifference to the task of promoting mass tourism, the Moscow TEU in 1950 formed

36. *Trud*, 7 September 1949, “Massovyi turizm”; GARF, f. 7576, op. 14, d. 63, ll. 140–150; f. 9520, op. 1, d. 79 (reports on tourism work, 1948), l. 17; d. 168 (reports on badge-worthy itineraries, 1950), l. 119 (quote).

a parallel institution to provide a new model for the development of mass tourism, the Moscow Tourist Club. Volunteer activists here organized sections according to the type of travel, advised prospective tourists (13,000 in 1950) on potential itineraries, certified planned trips of independent tourist groups (530 groups with 2,500 people in 1950), and archived the trip reports of groups upon their return. Together with the more active local sports societies, the Moscow Tourist Club and others began to organize annual tourist rallies (*slety*), at which tourist collectives would compete in a range of tourist skills—orienteeing, building fires, and cooking meals on them. At day's end all the tourists would gather around the central campfire and share songs and tourist memories. The Bolshevik Sports Society boasted one of the more active tourist sections, and in 1950 it sponsored its own "all-union rally" at a site near Khosta on the Black Sea.<sup>37</sup> In the coming years, the annual May 1 rally would officially launch the independent touring season. Participants in these rallies were the successors to the intrepid independent tourists of the 1930s. Tourist clubs became centers of independent and autonomous enthusiasts, drawn largely from the ranks of students and educated professionals. Their subculture of active tourism would become a hallmark of the Soviet urban intellectual by the 1970s. The Moscow Tourist Club survived well beyond the end of the USSR.

The TEU sought also to serve "genuine" tourists on selected packaged itineraries designed to teach and test basic tourist knowledge and skills, culminating in the award of the badge "Tourist of the USSR." The badge had been adopted in 1939, modeled on the military preparedness badge (GTO—"Prepared for Labor and Defense") and capitalizing on the popularity of the sporting Alpinist SSSR badge awarded to participants in mountaineering camps and expeditions. The tourist authority planned in 1939 to award twenty-five thousand such badges, and after the war the badges would provide a convenient metric for the success of mass tourism.<sup>38</sup> For the tourists, the badge also offered tangible motivation for their rigorous trips. A diary kept by the Leningrad tourist Smazkova from her 1951 rowboat trip through Karelia captured her anxiety on the eve of the final test, administered by a visiting commission, and the joy and celebration as each of the participants, bonded as a tourist collective through the common rigors of their trip, received her treasured prize. Tourist bases in the Caucasus earned praise for their celebratory welcome of each group as they returned from their 180-kilometer test treks: at Krasnaia Poliana, the successful hikers were greeted with bouquets of flowers and specially prepared fruit compote.<sup>39</sup> This was supposed to be the future of mass tourism, bouquets and rucksacks for all.

37. Tsentral'nyi arkhiv goroda Moskv (TsAGM), f. 28, op. 2, d. 48, ll. 74–77 (Moscow Tourist Club report, 1950); *Trud*, 17 June 1950; 7 June 1953.

38. NSNM, no. 12 (1938): 2; NSNM, no. 1 (1939): 4; see GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 116 (reports on Tourist USSR badges, 1949). The program appears in detail in NSNM, no. 4 (1939): 28.

39. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 204 (trip diary, 1951); d. 260, l. 12.



“Tourist of the USSR” badge. Badge in author’s possession.

Activists celebrated these new signs of tourism’s popularity, but they refused to acknowledge that Soviet tourism had come to represent different kinds of travel and vacation experiences, each with its own supporters and clients. As in the 1930s, a large source of the demand for tourist *putevki* came from those pajama people who had been unable to secure a rest home pass but could purchase a tourist trip from the TEU. Such tourists refused to go on rigorous overnight trips; they badgered officials to allow them to stay on the coast. Even local day trips proved too strenuous for some. These self-identified “kurortniki” intended all along to seek the pleasures of the seaside resorts, and then they complained when the tourist bases did not provide enough amusement for them. “Such people are not interested in excursions, but only want to lie on the beach, interfering with service for genuine tourists.”<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, the critics responded tacitly to the demand for a poor man’s *kurort* vacation by expanding the number of itineraries that most closely mimicked a rest home or sanatorium stay. Radial tours, such as itinerary number 32 to Sochi, provided vacationers with ten- or twenty-day stays in

40. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 217 (Krasnodar TEU reports, 1952), ll. 108, 29, 24, 70ob., 109–110; d. 260 (Krasnodar tourist base reports, 1953), l. 42.

single location: a kurort vacation without the morning medical treatments. In 1950, seventeen of the TEU's thirty-two itineraries took the radial form, and descriptions of these tours emphasized their resort characteristics. "Among the health resorts of our native land, Sochi is celebrated as one of the best," began the description of the Sochi "tour"; Khosta "is a resort settlement, located on the shore of the Black Sea 20 kilometers to the south of Sochi." The new itinerary number 49 in 1952 took tourists to "the best kurorts" in the country.<sup>41</sup>

Between the prospect of the pseudo-spa tourist base vacation and the quest for tourist glory was a huge middle ground that tourism officials seldom acknowledged but that gained new popularity after the war. Soviet tourists enjoyed the opportunity to visit museums and archeological digs and botanical gardens. They waxed rhapsodic about nighttime hikes through pine forests and meeting the dawn around a campfire. Many on radial tours actually wanted to use their tourist bases as starting points for excursions throughout the region. They yearned to encounter nature; they wanted to savor the aromas of food cooked over an open fire but not every night; they wished to walk the dizzying heights of the Ossetian Military Highway but not necessarily for 180 kilometers. These average tourists wanted to see new sights and to learn new things, but they also desired comfort, recreation, varied entertainment, and rest.<sup>42</sup> Tourists themselves spoke for these aspirations in the comments they left after their visits, but tourist officials continued to squabble over the proper approach, to ask "Who answers for tourism?" without acknowledging that Soviet tourism came in different variants.

Competing visions among tourism administrators and indifference by higher trade union organizations led to official neglect of tourism as a legitimate vacation option. Since they were not subsidized through the trade unions' social insurance fund, and since state resources were directed toward expanding medicalized spa vacations, tourist vacations actually cost more than a rest home stay. Tourists also found surprising added costs in the form of fees for registration and for attractions like boat rides and photographs to commemorate their stays. But tourism remained a poor man's vacation in terms of the services tourists could expect: sleeping in field tents rather than hotels, dancing to scratchy phonograph records instead of a live jazz band. But this minimalism was also part of tourism's special allure: "I need to add that tourists are generally very undemanding people," wrote one 1949 visitor to the Sochi tourist base. "We have a quite popular saying: we are tourists, not kurortniki, how can we demand anything, we ought to suffer and become hardened."<sup>43</sup>

41. "Among the health resorts," *Turistskie marshruty po SSSR*, ed. O. A. Arkhangel'skaia (Moscow, 1950), 183–184, 66 (quote), 68; "best kurorts," GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 217, ll. 20–22.

42. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 80, ll. 2, 5, 186; d. 217, l. 21; d. 167, ll. 59, 24, 58; d. 117, l. 18; d. 165, ll. 15–16.

43. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 117, l. 146ob. (quote), l. 146.





Tourist base on the shore of Lake Seliger, August 1951. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0226468. Used with permission of the archive.

The combination of high costs and the reputation of mass tourism as a rigorous sporting activity kept tourism out of the public consciousness in the first five years after the war. About 10,000 people participated in tours in 1946, the first full year after the war, well below the peak of 250,000 in 1939. Only in 1950 did the volume of tourist traffic begin to increase noticeably and the capacity of tourist destinations start to recover. The overall numbers of tourists remained low. In 1950 the Soviet Union offered to its citizens 2,070 sanatoria and 891 rest homes, but only 81 tourist bases and alpine camps existed to serve vacations on the road.<sup>44</sup>

### Access and Status: The Reassertion of Privilege

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, sober economic realities meant that not every Soviet citizen who was entitled to a vacation—whether on a tourist trail, in a forest rest home, or in a marble seaside sanatorium—could actually

44. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 31 (TEU reports, 1946), l. 15; *Trud*, 22 September 1945; a Sochi example in GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 260, l. 41; f. 7576, op. 14, d. 63; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1956 godu*, 275.

receive one. Officially, as has been noted, war invalids, pregnant women, and leading production workers were to receive priority for subsidized putevki, and as in the 1930s, health spa administrators kept careful records of these categories. Official targets, such as 60 percent or 80 percent workers, had been dropped, but these data and a growing tide of alarming anecdotal evidence told administrators that in the land of the Soviets, citizens with knowledge of the system and the ability to manipulate it continued to put themselves and their friends and family in the best vacation spots. In this respect, the gap between the ideal of communist abundance and equality and the reality of socialist distinction remained unchanged after the war. But in the postwar years, the newly prominent intelligentsia came to be seen as the rightful recipients of the scarce vacation opportunities.

The procedure for acquiring a spa, rest home, or tourist putevka had not changed since the war: the path to a vacation ran through one's place of employment. Anyone who wished to spend his or her annual leave at a sanatorium or rest home needed first to visit the doctor, then to appear before the enterprise insurance commission, and finally with its approval, to approach the factory committee, which controlled the putevki distributed by its trade union.<sup>45</sup> Medical necessity continued to be the first requirement for the allocation of a vacation away from home. Assigning access to leisure travel at the workplace helped to cement the close relationship between production and recreation, linking the right to rest to economic and social effort, a contribution best evaluated at the point of production.

Medical need and workplace honor, however, yielded to influence and connections, continuing the pattern of corruption that had been so prevalent before 1941. Central authorities acknowledged that local boards either did not care or did not know how to select the most appropriate recipients of health spa putevki. Kurort doctors threw up their hands at the flow of patients; as many as half of the total arrived with the wrong medical conditions, "especially in summer." Or they arrived in August with a putevka designated for October. Instead of the "most worthy and honored" veterans, invalids, and production workers, too many enterprise committees were giving putevki to "employees and dependents," despite an explicit decree from the Central Trade Union Council forbidding this practice. The pattern carried over into the distribution of tourist trip vouchers, whereby factory committees knowingly issued them to individuals who planned all along to remain on the beach. Meanwhile, young and healthy "miners, transport workers, metal workers, textile workers and chemical workers voiced many reprimands because tourist putevki were practically inaccessible to them." Organizers at the Moscow oblast tourist base in Borodino lamented the arrival of too many elderly people and even invalids for their hiking trips, all because unions

45. *Trud*, 25 January 1946; 14 November 1946.

“distribute putevki mechanically, without thought, and often incorrectly informing the recipient that the tourist base is a rest home.”<sup>46</sup>

The social reality of the Soviet vacation is captured in the fragmentary collections of reports about resters and tourists. Every institution was required to record information about sex, occupation, and age for each of its resters and to provide compilations in their annual reports.<sup>47</sup> We have some useful snapshots of the vacationers at Moscow oblast rest homes from 1947 to 1952: the percentage of workers here fluctuated from 39 percent to 50 percent in 1952.<sup>48</sup> In Sochi the prewar patterns prevailed, in which the percentage of workers in sanatoria was highest in the winter months and lowest in the peak vacation months of July, August, September, and October. Trade unions and factories frequently could not even dispose of all their winter-month putevki.<sup>49</sup> The disproportion of workers receiving vacations in the unfashionable winter season suggests the second-class status accorded to them.

Workers were even scarcer among postwar tourists than among rest home vacationers, and the designation “proletarian tourism” had long since disappeared from the tourism movement’s vocabulary. Again data are only fragmentary, but the composition of one group of tourists in 1951 is representative. Students, engineers, teachers, and scientists comprised 67 percent of the total and workers only 13 percent. By 1954 the category “intelligentsia” had begun to appear in these reports for both tourism and health spa vacations, and most of the postwar tourists were now members of this group, followed by white-collar employees. The all-union Kurort Administration reported in that year that of the many members of the intelligentsia at the resorts, most were healthy people who were accustomed to going there for pleasure, not treatment.<sup>50</sup>

Other distinctions among vacationers, both at spas and on tourist trips, appear in the record but with much less commentary by officials. Men and women appear to have been sent to health spas and rest homes in roughly the same proportion as they were represented in the population as a whole.

46. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 20, l. 19; d. 21, ll. 15–16, 23; d. 1660 (sanatorium directors’ conferences, 1949), l. 29; d. 78, l. 79; f. 9520, op. 1, d. 217, ll. 71ob., 72, 109–110; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 101 (Moscow TEU reports, 1953), ll. 49–50.

47. Such compilations remain in archived folders, never systematically aggregated, perhaps because the results demonstrated how little the center’s policies were followed. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21, l. 23.

48. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 329 (medical reports of sanatoria and rest homes, 1947); GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 385 (rest home medical report, 1948); TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 443 (rest home medical report, 1948); GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 768; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 679 (rest home medical report, 1950); d. 802 (rest home medical report, 1951); d. 920 (rest home medical report, 1952).

49. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 55; GAGS, f. 178, op. 1, d. 26 (sanatorium medical report, 1952); f. 214, op. 1, d. 72 (sanatorium medical report, 1953); GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21, l. 16ob; d. 78, ll. 43, 82.

50. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 193; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 117 (Moscow TEU reports, 1954); GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 916 (kurort directors’ conference, 24–28 March 1955).

Women participated in organized tourist travel in numbers disproportionate to their share of the population: teachers, who were predominantly female, accounted for a large part of summertime tourist trips, but we find no discussion of the implications of this phenomenon.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the predominance of women tourists was one factor in tourism's low overall status when it came to allocating state funds for vacation travel.

All-union sanatoria and tourist bases emphasized the nationwide character of the vacation experience, and vacationers noted in their comments their appreciation at being among people "from all corners" of the great nation. The Hammer and Sickle factory's N. Stepanov, the shift boss in the rolling mill, noted in stilted official language the friendship he developed with his sanatorium roommate, the chairman of an Uzbek cotton collective farm: "Only in the Soviet Union does every person have the right to rest, regardless of his nationality and race [*rasovaia prinadlezhnost'*]." <sup>52</sup> Moscow was over-represented among spa vacationers, with its officials and intellectuals who knew how to manipulate the system. Among tourists there was a definite Moscow-Leningrad bias in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Moscow's TEU accounted for much of this imbalance as one of the first and strongest to revive after the war, but it also catered to a knowledgeable and economically privileged clientele eager to take advantage of tourism opportunities. The head of the Kiev tourist authority acknowledged in 1953 the low demand for tourist putevki to Transcarpathia by residents of his republic, whereas these putevki would sell out "in an instant" in Leningrad.<sup>53</sup>

Moscow itself rather than Crimea or the Caucasus served as the primary mecca and melting pot for visitors from elsewhere. Despite primitive lodging conditions, hundreds of groups wrote paeans to the organizers in the comment book of the Moscow tourist base from 1949 to 1952. A student group from Tallinn thrilled in 1949 to see for the first time "beautiful Moscow—the capital of our socialist homeland"; in July 1950 teachers from Arkhangel'sk "saw everything that we had dreamed about for many years"; students from L'vov State University enumerated in 1951 the "unforgettable impressions" produced by the wonderful historical city. They particularly singled out the

51. Women comprised 63 percent of the tourists on itinerary number 42 (North Ossetia) in 1951 while making up 56 percent of the population. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 193; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo v 1973 godu*, 8. In 1954 women were 57 percent of the visitors to Moscow tourist bases and 65 percent of participants on a Moscow oblast hike. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 98 (social composition of tourists, 1953); d. 117; in the same years, men accounted for over 50 percent of patients at the Leningrad Northern Riviera sanatorium. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1961 (rest home and sanatorium reports, 1955).

52. *Martenovka*, 18 July 1946 (quote); 28 August 1952; GAGS, f. 195, op. 1, d. 52 (Krasnaia Poliana tourist base comments, 1951), l. 28; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 34 (Moscow tourist base comments, 1949–1952), l. 29. But there was no notice of ethnic difference among sampled comments of vacationers at the textile workers' sanatorium in Sochi. GAGS, f. 178, op. 1, d. 9.

53. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 262 (regional TEU reports, 1953), ll. 116–117.

caring and attentive group leaders who welcomed and guided “tourists from different corners of the native land, many speaking different languages.” By 1954 the Moscow tourist base welcomed 4,247 tourists from as far away as Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Iakutiia, and China. Administrators of Moscow oblast rest homes also added excursions to the sights of Moscow such as Red Square and the Tret'iakov Gallery for their out-of-town vacationers.<sup>54</sup> The allure of urban tourism represents a different kind of appeal from that of languid vacations in the south, and we can begin to see in these city tours another example of convergence between rest and tourism. Cultured and purposeful sightseeing was gradually coming to be an expected component of leisure travel, even if its primary purpose was rest or physical exercise.

### Planning Vacations for Socialist Prosperity

Until 1950, recovering and rebuilding lost capacity constituted the main story of vacation and travel work and investment. Now having restored the infrastructure and material prerequisites, officials turned their attention to the content of the Soviet vacation. What should a proper vacation be? The purposeful nature of the right to rest retained pride of place in discussions and plans, beginning as always with medicine. In discussions about the “wrong people” receiving putevki, sanatorium and rest home managers expressed concerns about fairness and corruption, but always in the language of medical utility. A spa vacation was meant above all to restore the health of the vacationer, and healthy people at sanatoria took these valuable places away from the truly medically needy.<sup>55</sup> But now in the 1950s needy vacationers would receive medical care and cultural services at the highest professional level.

The very administrative structure of health spas emphasized their medical basis and signaled the expanded authority of medical professionals. At the summit of each institution stood the head doctor, the supreme manager who assumed responsibility for all aspects of the vacation experience. The head doctor of a Leningrad sanatorium, Platinina, with twenty-five years' experience in the trade union health spa system, reminded fellow doctors of this point at a 1949 conference. We deal with treatment, she said, which in a narrow sense referred to medical procedures: baths, dosed walking, X-ray treatments, drinking mineral water, and massages. But in their sanatorium, treatment began from the minute the patient arrived and did not depend on the number of procedures performed. “In our sanatoria and rest homes, every moment is medical.” “The health of the individual,” said

54. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 34; d. 117, l. 8; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1089 (reports on cultural work at rest homes, 1954), l. 2.

55. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 77, ll. 20–23; d. 141, ll. 82, 112; *Trud*, 18 November 1949; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 78, ll. 79–83, 138.



Relaxing on the terrace of the railway workers' union rest home at Khot'kovo, Moscow oblast, July 1952. Photograph by Evzerikhin. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0249400. Used with permission of the archive.

another, "is our product." Each head doctor reported on the medical conditions and outcomes for the patients: whatever condition they had arrived in, patients were supposed to return to work not just rested but measurably healthier as well as heavier—weight gain continued to be a marker of physical well-being in these years when famine still lurked in memory and experience.<sup>56</sup>

Expansion of the right to this therapeutic rest required not just more beds for more laboring people but also more and better medical services. Patients and doctors hailed the appearance of dental clinics because healthy teeth contributed to improved digestion, warding off disease. In Yalta, 80 percent of patients by 1954 used the services of the resident dentist.<sup>57</sup> Some physicians also pointed to the usefulness of psychotherapeutic services as part of the vacation regime. Patients themselves expected to receive thorough instructions from physicians for their medical regime, they complained when the medical

56. "In our sanatoria," GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 77, ll. 126–129 (quote, l. 129), 161; "The health of the individual," TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 949 (head doctors' conference, June 1953), l. 48; d. 329, l. 10; d. 920; d. 949.

57. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 77, l. 162; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 443, l. 13; d. 679, l. 15; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1955 (trade union sanatorium officials' conference, January 1955), l. 18.



staff did not enforce compliance with the regime, and they praised those doctors and nurses who provided caring and knowledgeable treatments.<sup>58</sup>

Medical treatments would repair the laboring person's body. High-quality programming was equally important for their cultural, political, and social development. During these precious hours and days away from work, Soviet laboring people deserved to receive continuing education that would make them better citizens and better human beings. Entertainment for its own sake was inappropriate for Communist vacationers, and cultural activists debated the correct balance between purposeful leisure activities and pure play. "We need entertainment," argued an official at a 1951 congress, "but within strict limits." Others admitted that cultural work before the war had focused too much on amusement, but now the cultural levels and demands of the Soviet people had grown sufficiently that they needed to be entertained *and* educated.<sup>59</sup> The New Soviet Person demanded no less.

Beginning in 1950, therefore, cultural programming emerged as a new priority. In the big resort towns like Yalta and Sochi, vacationers, patients, and tourists alike could partake of central facilities such as cinemas, theaters (some with their own jazz orchestras), libraries, and parks. Sochi's Park Riviera reopened in 1950, offering to its visitors an outdoor theater, a table games pavilion, sports equipment, a library-reading room, and a public beach. Individual sanatoria and rest homes also organized their own activities for patients and vacationers: the wealthiest ones built their own auditoriums (*kluby*) with seating for several hundred spectators, but many more made do with makeshift entertainments outdoors or in the dining room.<sup>60</sup> Ideally, every minute of the day would be occupied in useful and varied activities, as described by a Moscow oblast sanatorium's ten-day plan for each of the four daily "activity periods." The plan included outdoor walks or billiards tournaments in the morning; dancing, reading aloud, or table games at noon; lectures, quizzes, dance lessons, games, and mass song in the early evening; and movies and concerts at night. More typically perhaps, vacationers could expect morning exercises, a walk in

58. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 949, l. 12; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 412 (correspondence with editors of *Krasnoe znamia* [Sochi], 1952), l. 20; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1902 (reports and comment books, 1952–53), ll. 8, 11, 14; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498 (correspondence with editors of *Krasnoe znamia*, 1954), l. 36; f. 178, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 2, 8, 10ob., 11ob., 16ob., 21, 25ob., 27ob., 33; *Trud*, 29 August 1950; 18 June 1952.

59. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 706 (directors' and sanatorium staff conference, January 1951), ll. 29, 30, 60, 66–67; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1660, l. 37.

60. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 368 (correspondence with editors of *Krasnoe znamia*, 1951), l. 81; d. 460 (correspondence with editors of *Krasnoe znamia*, 1953), l. 31; d. 355 (materials on cultural work, 1950–1953), ll. 7ob., 23; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1982 (conference to review cultural work, June–July 1949), l. 44; the club at the Monino sanatorium in Moscow seated four hundred, with a green room, coat room, toilets, and billiards. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 706, l. 25.

the woods, and mass games, cinema, and dancing every night for the duration of their stay.<sup>61</sup>

Purposeful culture meant lectures on ideological, political, and cultural themes; concerts of serious music; and games that encouraged vacationers to use their wits and expand their knowledge. The Sochi cultural bureau presented a total of 1,623 lectures in its 1949 season, with topics on literature, art, science, and politics accounting for more than half. In these years of Cold War threats and new mobilization, lectures on the “international situation”—once the stuff of jokes in the 1920s—now drew serious attention and praise from vacationers.<sup>62</sup> The bureau also organized 2,500 group excursions that emphasized cultural and natural destinations, led by knowledgeable guides who would provide maximum cultural value to the visitors. Symphony concerts, both live and recorded, contributed to ongoing education in music appreciation.<sup>63</sup>

Making one's own music constituted a widespread and popular form of vacation activity, both in the stationary places and among tourists. “Amateur productions,” featuring folk music and dance, dramatic readings, and choral singing, had been a staple of vacation evenings since the 1920s, inexpensive and empowering at the same time. Tour groups would rehearse their programs while on the road, culminating with a gala performance at the tour's closing campfire. Every sanatorium and rest home tried to stockpile collections of instruments for use in these concerts; some even procured folk costumes. Such performances could also aid in ongoing political education: in one Moscow sanatorium, a new amateur program, “The Struggle for Peace,” was added to the repertory in 1950.<sup>64</sup>

Active recreation included participatory sports, games, and dancing. Photographs of rest home activities often show outdoor volleyball games, which entertained players and spectators alike. In the cultural organizer's activity box were books such as *365 Games and Leisure Hours*, and organized quiz games—called *viktorinas*—amused and educated vacationers with a spirit of knowledge and competition. Simultaneous chess and checkers tournaments also attracted participants and praise. And everywhere there was dancing. Although in the early years of the Cold War, “West European dances” like

61. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 305 (reports on Moscow region cultural work, 1947), l. 11; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1660, l. 37.

62. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 322, l. 2. Lectures on the international situation were guaranteed to put audiences to sleep. Koenker, *Republic of Labor*, 166–167. One anecdote from the early 1930s: Ivan Ivanovich has a job for life: every day he climbs Moscow's highest tower to ring the bell when the world revolution starts. Eugene Lyons, *Moscow Carrousel* (New York, 1935), 324.

63. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 322, l. 2. On a rainy Saturday in May 2006, retracing the canonical itinerary of Soviet vacationers, I was the sole visitor to the Nikolai Ostrovskii Literature-Memorial Museum, and there were only a handful of visitors to the landscaped terraces of the Dendrarium. See GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 355, ll. 21, 45.

64. GAGS, f. 178, op. 1, d. 9; f. 24, op. 1, d. 460; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 193, l. 112; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 590 (cultural work report for 1950), l. 4; d. 305, l. 13.



Dancing on the veranda at a rest home, near the city of Ples, Ivanovo oblast, early 1950s. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 1–28116. Used with permission of the archive.

the tango and foxtrot were removed from the realm of the permissible, policing cultural tastes proved impossible. As Juliane Fürst has written, “Post-war youth danced. At any occasion and in any place, young people set up makeshift dance floors and spent their time revolving to the tune of waltzes, foxtrots, and tangos.”<sup>65</sup>

As before the war, films constituted a major form of health spa and rest home entertainment, but viewers had become more discriminating. Vacationers in Sochi in 1948 expected to watch first-run films both in town cinemas and in their own sanatoria. These entertainments and cultural activities were not always included in the *putevka*: typically vacationers had to buy tickets for the cinema and concerts, and some sanatoria charged their patients for their games of billiards. The existence of a market for leisure activities suggests something about patient demand. By 1954 they insisted on being entertained: you cannot rest well “when the leisure hours are not filled with interesting amusement,” wrote the Sochi newspaper *Krasnoe znamia* in 1954, “where people are simply bored.”<sup>66</sup>

65. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 679, l. 3; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 355, ll. 7ob., 47; Fürst, *Stalin's Last Generation*, 201.

66. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 355, l. 23; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1669 (cultural work reports, 1949), ll. 28–29; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 706, l. 74; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498, l. 99 (quote).

The reality for many vacationers was neither too much uplifting leisure nor too much fun but too little of either. Most sanatoria were still dominated by tedium, wrote *Trud* in August 1950. The vacationer Khrulev complained to the Sochi newspaper in 1951 about the absence of interesting lectures on “atomic energy and the morality of the Soviet person”: “Many vacationers engage in activities such as hooliganizing and drinking, which have become normal occurrences, all because there has been no educational work conducted in the sanatoria for an entire two months.”<sup>67</sup>

And who was to blame for this boredom and resulting misbehavior? The absence of suitable and qualified cultural leadership emerged over and over as a major problem in the Soviet vacation experience. Cultural programming at health spas and rest homes fell under the jurisdiction of the “cultural worker.” Ideally this *kul'trabotnik* would be joined by a musician, usually an accordion player, assigned to provide dance music, accompany amateur musical performances, and give music lessons as well: a good accordionist could help ensure a happy stay at a sanatorium. A specialized librarian might supervise the library and organize the question-and-answer games. In addition, and increasingly in the 1950s, the cultural staff would also include the “group leader,” *massovik*, who performed a function similar to that of the Redcoats of Billy Butlin's holiday camps in the United Kingdom. Part entertainer, part master of ceremonies, part camp counselor, a good *massovik* would motivate the vacationers to take part in the games and activities of the spa.<sup>68</sup> Cultural workers received miserly pay, and given the seasonal demand for their services, it was difficult to recruit and retain good workers who possessed both the talent to lead mass games and the ideological credentials to be trusted to prepare programs on political and social themes. Among tourist groups, guides doubled as cultural programmers.<sup>69</sup> They received short training courses from the TEU, but here too the pay was low and turnover a perpetual problem.

If the level of medical skill at vacation palaces had increased by 1950, the low professionalism of cultural workers drew consternation. In general, cultural programming represented yet another element of the socialist project that received more vocal than material support. As Kristin Roth-Ey notes in her study of postwar Soviet culture, “it was not until the late fifties that the regime was materially capable of making any culture a part of everyday life on a mass scale.”<sup>70</sup> Within the realm of vacations, tourism ranked even lower in the provision of cultural funding than the health resorts.

67. *Trud*, 29 August 1950; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 368, l. 49ob. (quote).

68. GAGS, f. 178, op. 1, d. 9, l. 16ob.; Ward and Hardy, *Goodnight Campers!*, 87–89; see the 1990 film *Moia Moriachka* (*My Sailor Girl*), dir. Anatolii Eiramdzhan, starring Liudmila Gurchenko as a Crimean resort *massovik*; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 355, ll. 7–7ob.

69. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 305, l. 7; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 141, l. 5. In a later period, a conflicted Georgian *massovik* who resents entertaining his Russian guests is featured in the film *Plovets* (Georgian, *Mocurave*; *The Swimmer*), dir. Irakli Kvirikadze, 1981; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 15; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 260, l. 18; d. 80, ll. 44–45; d. 193, l. 33; d. 262, ll. 88–89.

70. Kristin Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War* (Ithaca, NY, 2011), 10.

In theory, if not in practice, robust cultural programming distinguished the purposeful Soviet vacation from the allegedly idle pastimes of bourgeois travelers in the West. But Soviet citizens also deserved their moments of quiet and repose, argued officials, and they were entitled to enjoy these amid optimal conditions for the mending of their human organisms. As the kurort doctor Plastinina noted, every aspect of the resort stay contributed to the successful restoration of the patient/vacationer's health. Comfort, quiet, and coziness could be just as important as mineral water and sunlight in assuring proper outcomes. Starting in 1950, the provision of these amenities received new scientific affirmation in the name of the physiologist Ivan Pavlov, whose teachings had reemerged as the authoritative approach to psychological conditioning. As the director of the Tuapse rest home reminded officials in 1952, citing Pavlov, "It is not the water itself [of the Caucasus Mineral Waters] that provides the cure, but the opportunity to distract the patient from the usual way of life, from their cares and worries." Translated into the workings of sanatoria and resorts, this "Pavlov perspective" required quiet, pleasing meal service, sound sleep, and tasteful material surroundings. The all-union review of 1950 had emphasized precisely the qualities of comfort and beauty, and vacationers praised these features when they were present and complained when they were not.<sup>71</sup>

The celebration of postwar pleasure centered above all on the service of food. Pavlov principles dictated that meals were more than an opportunity for caloric intake; presentation and ambiance possessed therapeutic properties in their own right. For many vacationers, mealtimes symbolized the special care and attention that they lacked at home and thus sought in their prized time away. In their travels along their routes, tourists regularly exchanged information on food—"here it is better, there it is worse." A group on a Crimean itinerary wrote in 1950, "The best base for food, culture, and excursions was Bakhchisarai. This is a real tourist camp!"<sup>72</sup> Sedentary vacationers had little choice or basis for comparison, but they also conveyed their dissatisfaction with the variety and quality of the food served in the dining rooms of their sanatoria and rest homes. When the food was "varied and tasty," as in the comments at the Electrical Industry's rest home in 1953, vacationers singled out the chef for special praise.<sup>73</sup>

71. Loren Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union* (New York, 1974), 374–375; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1861 (report of a trade union kurort department, 1952), l. 76; d. 141, ll. 13–15, 18, 37, 167, 219–221, 240; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 920, l. 22; GAGS, f. 214, op. 1, d. 72, l. 34; f. 178, op. 1, d. 26, l. 54; d. 9; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1748; d. 141; f. 9520, op. 1, d. 167.

72. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 99 (conference on sanatorium food services, November 1950), l. 127; f. 9520, op. 1, d. 165, l. 14; d. 54 (tourist base comment books, 1947), l. 115; d. 35 (tourist base comment books, 1946), l. 67; d. 167, ll. 58–59.

73. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 295 (auxiliary farm reports, April 1947), l. 3; d. 576, ll. 69, 119; d. 949, ll. 15–16, 89; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1660, l. 89; d. 1903 (reports on aid to rest homes and sanatoria, 1953), ll. 6, 38–39, 46, 71, 147; d. 1902, ll. 4–14.



Cultured dining room at the miners' trade union Ordzhonikidze sanatorium in Sochi, 1949. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0207507. Used with permission of the archive.

The inadequacy of pleasing food could be blamed above all on the endemic shortages that plagued the entire Soviet Union in these hungry years, shortages mostly of food products but also of skilled kitchen staff. A conference of the health resort system's chefs demonstrated that though they wanted to provide Soviet vacationers with an appetizing and beautiful dining experience, their hands were tied by shortages. Not only was it difficult to procure fresh fruit and vegetables, but head chefs complained particularly about the scarcity of spices and condiments, ingredients that could help to provide the variety they and their customers desired. Seeking to raise the overall level of resort cuisine, they shared their secrets for improving meals and dishes, and master chefs demonstrated how to plan seven-day menus with plenty of variety and good nutritional value. They recognized the importance of the caring personal touch that had become the norm in the postwar years. The



customer was always right, and chefs and serving staff should try to cater even to their capricious requests. A wise chef would regularly visit the dining room, supervising the waitresses, making sure that every table was well supplied with bread, napkins, and cutlery, and above all, listening to the concerns of their clients.<sup>74</sup>

These conscientious chefs, however, also chided the vacationers themselves for their reluctance to expand their culinary horizons. The best kind of dining room service allowed vacationers to order in advance from a menu, but some diners stayed with the safe and familiar, requesting buckwheat kasha even for dinner. They avoided strange-sounding dishes like *romshteks* (breaded beefsteak) or the Central Asian *plov* (pilaf). One diner ordered chopped meat cutlet for breakfast, dinner, and supper, and his chef had to scold him: “What, don’t you have any teeth?” Once the diner had tasted *romshteks*, he enthusiastically ordered it the next day.<sup>75</sup> The chefs also emphasized the importance of including dishes from various ethnicities on their menus, not just for variety but because it was socially proper. “If Russian people come here who have never tasted an ethnic dish, they are afraid to order it. You need to coax them to try it, so that they know what it tastes like and they learn that these dishes can be delicious.” Others agreed that Eastern and Asian dishes, and even nonmeat dishes, possessed both nutritional and culinary value but that they, like *romshteks*, had to be introduced into the dining room with tact. As with the cultural programs, even in the dining room a Soviet vacation should expand the horizons. Guided by experts like these, new Soviet vacationers would acquire valuable cultural and culinary literacy.

### **Soviet Vacations and Market Thinking: From the Right to Rest to the Right to Choose?**

In the Cold War years of the early 1950s, Soviet vacation publicity increasingly called attention to the difference between socialist vacations for all and the capitalist system, in which only the rich could travel and play.<sup>76</sup> Socialist consumerism would be democratic and universal, although under socialism as well as capitalism, the very concept of consumerism implied assortment, variety, and choice.<sup>77</sup> Soviet consumerism also differed from its capitalist counterpart in its organization: rather than relying on the invisible hand of the market, Soviet enterprises—including those serving leisure travel and vacations—were managed by central bureaucratic structures, ministries and powerful trade union committees that had been consolidated through the five-year plans of the 1930s and 1940s.

74. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 99, ll. 23–24, 32, 36, 48, 64–65, 68, 96; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 329.

75. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 99, l. 36.

76. *Trud*, 13 April 1952; 14 June 1953.

77. Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne*.

As the managers planned the restoration of vacations after the war, they had an opportunity to rethink the way in which this leisure enterprise was organized. The path of least resistance was to continue with central plans and allocations, with notional prices and no bottom line, a “soft budget constraint” that discouraged efforts to make rational and efficient use of scarce resources. But there also arose in this period isolated voices speaking in favor of a more market-oriented organization of the leisure industry, early harbingers of the reforms that economic experts would start to implement in the 1960s.

In the postwar USSR, the Ministry of Health and the trade unions continued to assume responsibility for the organization of what elsewhere would have been labeled a vacation industry. Socialist Yugoslavia, for example, appropriated a bourgeois vacation infrastructure in the late 1940s and assigned it to an economic ministry, treating tourism and vacations as another unit of the economy, like a business.<sup>78</sup> The administrative peculiarity of Soviet vacations, located outside economic structures, led in turn to a series of contradictions that only became more noticeable as the professional level of managers and vacationers became more sophisticated after the war.

Were vacation institutions subject to the rules of supply and demand or not? Tourism enthusiasts continued to criticize the central Tourism-Excursion Authority for being concerned only with market demand, maximizing revenue, and profits. The fact that most people wanted to visit Crimea and the Caucasus was no reason to allow them to do so. Central authorities knew best, argued the advocates of central planning, and they should decide how to invest in vacations and tourism. It was the responsibility of local organizations to appeal to the center for funds, a business model based on the dole, and to blame local problems on someone else. As one tourism enthusiast asserted in a 1948 meeting, “Of course, finances are an issue, but they shouldn’t determine everything.”<sup>79</sup>

This quasi-accountable, quasi-welfare structure led to further peculiarities in the business of Soviet vacations. Medical doctors bore the responsibility for the financial administration of their units, a task that they often resented and that many managed poorly. Purely economic solutions to questions of incentives and allocation of resources were met with skepticism. Faced with the problem of variable demand for rest home places in winter and summer, officials resisted the suggestion of differential pricing, “as exists the world over,” preferring instead to improve conditions in winterized rest homes to make them more attractive.<sup>80</sup>

Because tourism and health vacations were considered an entitlement and not a business, they continued to cede priority to productive economic activities. When the Moscow TEU revived its summertime Volga cruise itineraries in 1952, for example, it rented spaces on freight-hauling boats, and

78. Duda, “Workers into Tourists.”

79. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69, ll. 8ob., 9ob., 12, 20.

80. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21, ll. 3, 16ob.

the interests of tourists were subordinated to the requirements of the transport of goods. First, the passenger areas of the boats were small and uncomfortable, and second, the schedules were determined by the freight company, which limited the range of shore excursions that could be provided.<sup>81</sup>

The basic currency of Soviet vacations, the putevka, encapsulated all these contradictions between economic rationality and socialist desire. Putevki possessed a nominal monetary value, representing the cost of the services provided. Rest homes, tourist bases, and sanatoria received compensation for their services based on these costs. For example, in 1955, a summer putevka at a Sochi sanatorium was valued at about 46 rubles a day: 16.77 rubles from each putevka was designated for food, 6.51 for wages, 5.23 for medicine, and 88 kopecks for cultural activities. The largest share of the daily cost, however, 23 rubles, went to the expenses of Sochi as a whole (overhead, in academic research parlance), an invitingly large black hole. Putevki were meant to be distributed, not bought and sold, and their issuers—the factory and enterprise committees—bore no financial responsibility for their full utilization. Nor did the costs correspond to value because of the subsidies that came from social insurance. A tourist trip was actually less expensive than a rest home vacation because its facilities were more modest and the tourist provided his own recreation and locomotion. But tourist putevki were not eligible for a 30 percent insurance discount, and they cost the factory committees or the tourists real money to purchase. When they were issued for free or at discounts, their recipients had little incentive to use them: in 1952, one-third of tourist putevki went unutilized.<sup>82</sup>

In short, there was no official market in putevki, despite the existence of known supply and demonstrated demand. Cautious voices emerged in the 1950s to propose a more market-oriented way to balance the needs of consumers with the scarcities of vacation facilities. Why not sell unused putevki for cash, without red tape, suggested the head of the Georgian Kurort Administration in 1952. On the other hand, selling unused putevki for personal gain was an acknowledged form of trade union corruption: better to maintain red tape and eschew the market. The Moscow Tourism-Excursion Authority, one of the more active packagers of tourist travel in the early 1950s, combined both allocation and market. Of its planned sixteen thousand tourist putevki in 1953, it issued nine thousand in advance to trade union organizations who had applied for them. Most of the remainder were sold through the central Moscow office to individual consumers. As the result of an extensive publicity campaign (which could not be labeled “advertising”), the demand to purchase putevki was so great that the office had to hire extra staff in the first days of the sale.<sup>83</sup>

81. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 52–55.

82. GAGS, f. R-24, op. 1, d. 546 (correspondence with editors of *Krasnoe znamia*, 1955), l. 2; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69, l. 7; f. 7576, op. 14, d. 63, l. 99.

83. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 141, ll. 160, 82; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 82–84.

As Elena Zubkova has written, the rigors and success of the war effort had led many Soviet citizens to expect a softer regime, in which the comfort and pleasure of citizens, a “spirit of freedom,” would receive priority. Trade union officials, who represented the interests of Soviet citizens on the job and off, also signaled the possibility of new models of domestic vacations for the new age. They expected that more people would wish to travel; they acknowledged that Soviet citizens deserved a greater variety of vacation options, choices that fell between the twenty-six-day cure and the ten-day forced march of the training hike. Officials in Sochi in 1947 proposed the expansion of vacation opportunities outside the limits of the sanatorium *putevka*, arguing that an improving standard of living would result in more people wanting to spend their vacation on the move, not confined to one highly medicalized place. They wanted to “forget the doctor’s instructions” and stay on the beach for two or three hours if they wished, not for the prescribed twenty minutes monitored by a uniformed nurse. The trade union chief Shvernik had proposed to transfer many rest homes to the tourism authority in order to shift the balance of vacationing away from medicine and toward leisure travel. Hotels should be built to accommodate the new demand for travel in luxury and style but without the medical overhead of the health resort system. “It will be difficult to imagine tourism without these first-class hotels, which are worthy of our state, which will be respectable and radiant, so that entering them people will sense the expanse and the amplitude of our native land,” concluded another trade union official at a 1948 conference on tourism.<sup>84</sup>

Voices spoke tentatively of new models of vacation experiences, not the solitary medicalized reward for hard work or respite for job-stressed nerves but an opportunity for families to rest and travel together. Hotels and rest homes should be built with smaller rooms suitable for families, said some. Automobile tourism was especially inviting for family travel. In short, while the pull of traditional forms was strong, postwar discussions on vacations and tourism began to imagine a new hybrid kind of vacation in which pleasure and choice supplanted medical purpose.<sup>85</sup>

Two guides to Soviet health spas illustrate the changes that had taken place from the 1930s to the postwar period and also show the ambivalence about the direction that vacations should take. The 1936 guide to health resorts was a thick tome of 522 pages whose text emphasized the medical and meteorological properties of each of the listed resort destinations. Its illustrations emphasized the majestic but stern architecture of the repair shops for working people. But it opened its descriptions of the individual resorts with the three most traditional vacation destinations, and fully half of its

84. Zubkova, *Russia after the War*, 16; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 21, ll. 16ob, 23ob.; d. 1861, l. 71; f. 9520, op. 1, d. 69, ll. 23, 28 (quote); *Trud*, 13 July 1949.

85. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1861, l. 75; *Trud*, 13 July 1949; 30 April 1953. Timothy Dunmore, *Soviet Politics, 1945–53* (London, 1984), 42–59, discusses the conflict between familiar forms and ideas for change in industrial planning in this period.



Family camping: award-winning coal miner I. A. Potankin, Kemerovo, on holiday with his family and Moskvich automobile on the shore of the Tom' River, 25 July 1949. Photograph by L. Velikzhanin, TASS. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0272728. Used with permission of the archive.

illustrations depicted the Caucasus Mineral Waters, Crimea, and the Sochi coast. Moreover, each of these sections included the kind of practical advice for travelers found in any guidebook the world over: lists of restaurants, hotels, and local attractions and addresses for banks, hospitals, post offices, and other public utilities.<sup>86</sup>

The 1951 guide was larger in format and more sumptuously illustrated, with three times as many photographs as the 1936 edition. The text remained seriously medical, and the chemical composition of every healthful mineral spring was duly reported. The book's organization was rational and encyclopedic: the health places appeared in alphabetical order, by republic. Auxiliary information was limited to lists of popular local excursions, as though all other amenities would be provided by the palaces of health themselves. Yet if the words said "medicine," the photographs said "vacation." Although the photographs in this edition featured sanatorium and mineral bath buildings, many more included real vacationing people as part of the scenery. Photographs of pure scenery were more frequent in 1951, and so were images of people having fun: on the beach, in

86. *Kurorty SSSR. Spravochnik* (1936) (published with a print run of 15,200 copies and still available in used bookstores in Moscow).

motorboats, playing chess, or hiking a forest path. More destinations received photographic coverage; the “big three” commanded only one-third of the photographs in 1951, not one-half. More significant was the decrease in the illustrated prominence of what Alexander Werth called in 1946 the “huge health factory,” the Caucasus Mineral Waters. The whole Black Sea coast from Anapa to Batumi now received much more attention, as did Crimea, reflecting the decline all over the world of the nineteenth-century aristocratic mineral spa-based vacation in favor of the seaside and the pleasures it offered for mass consumption.<sup>87</sup> The continuities between the 1930s and 1951 remained powerful: vacations were medical, but they were also vacations, and guidebooks would help citizens explore the most popular and pleasurable destinations. New in 1951, instead of the impersonal structure of the built-vacation institutions, was the visual confirmation that the Soviet people could be active agents and architects of their vacation experience.

The interruption of the war years had made changes imaginable, but as the vacation and tourism structure revived by the early 1950s, it looked in many ways similar to what had been in place by the end of the 1930s. The relaunch of the Soviet project proceeded along the trajectory already plotted during the 1930s. There was no utopian moment in the postwar Soviet vacation, no dramatic shift away from the emphasis on monumental health palaces, and little diversification of their geographic distribution or of the practices of vacationers. This continuity may have reflected the straitened economic conditions after the war or the lack of imaginative leadership within the sphere of leisure travel. But the persistence of the prewar model for vacations might also have indicated a confidence in the original choices: the socialist good life included mobility, health, luxury, and sun. This was true in the 1920s, and it remained just as valid in 1950.

Soviet vacations in the postwar era continued to emphasize a distinctive combination of purpose and pleasure. Medicine remained all-important. Take away the therapeutic chemical properties of Matsesta water, said administrators in 1950, and you have no Sochi.<sup>88</sup> The vacations that addressed the therapeutic needs of citizens also included intellectual and cultural programs of self-improvement. Vacations should be a time to read useful books and gain new insight into the international situation through lectures and films. Tourist travel taught important survival skills as well as patriotic knowledge: the

87. *Kurorty SSSR*, ed. S.V. Kurashov, N.E. Khisanfov, and L.G. Gol'dfail' (Moscow, 1951); Werth, *Russia: The Post-war Years*, 157; see Jean-Didier Urbain, *Sur la plage: Moeurs et coutumes balnéaires (XIXe–XXe siècles)* (Paris, 1994); Mackaman, *Leisure Settings*; Ellen Furlough, “Packaging Pleasures: Club Méditerranée and French Consumer Culture, 1950–1968,” *French Historical Studies* 18, no. 1 (1993): 65–81; Löfgren, *On Holiday*, chap. 5, “The Mediterranean in the Age of the Package Tour.”

88. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 644 (kurort directors' conferences, 1950), l. 97.



original goals of the Society for Proletarian Tourism remained embedded in the itineraries and programs of Soviet tourist bases in the 1950s. At the same time, sanatoria, rest homes, and tourist bases also catered to the vacationers' desires for comfort and relaxation, for an escape from regimentation. This softer direction represented a continuation of the trends begun before the war, in which movies and dancing had already occupied a large part of the vacationers' evenings.

Postwar vacations and tourism continued to be administered by central state agencies, both the Ministry of Health and the Central Trade Union Council. But as before the war, these agencies often lacked the authority necessary to assert their claims to economic resources over rival agencies. Unless they started their own auxiliary farms, tourist bases and rest homes were at the mercy of the Ministry of Trade. Tourism advocates remained torn between the Tourism-Excursion Authority of the trade unions, which controlled most of the capital resources for tourist travel, and the local sports organizations. Vacation *putevki* were awarded on the basis of work and allocated through workplace trade union committees. Individuals accepted the *putevki* that were offered by their committees; ordinary people had little choice about where and when to take their vacations. Rarely could they choose *with whom* to take them: if husband and wife were employed in different enterprises, it would be difficult for them to arrange to receive matching *putevki* for a vacation of their choice.

Tourism, however, had lost ground, both in absolute numbers and in priority for investment. Already dwarfed by spa and rest home vacations in the late 1930s, Soviet tourism in the early 1950s most frequently offered alternative access to a spa-like vacation, not a sightseeing itinerary for its own sake. Advocates continued to believe that tourism was the best form of vacation, but tourism agencies proved unable or insufficiently energetic to compete for resources against the dominant Health Resort Administration.

In these respects, the war had only slowed down but did not alter the basic institutions for and approaches to Soviet leisure travel. But there were also clear signs of shifting mentalities and new priorities that appeared in vacation practices, particularly after 1950. Moderation and flexibility gained new advocates among *kurort* and tourism planners. The health resort stay should provide not just healing but comfort, culture, excursions, and new dining experiences. The benefits of tourist travel included fellowship, wonder, exercise, and self-reliance, but these did not necessarily require the extreme physical effort championed by advocates of sporting tourism at their annual rallies.

The voices of the vacationers themselves gained new authority in the postwar years, whether expressed through their comment books, in letters to newspapers, or in the casual encounters between consumers and providers of leisure travel. The cultural level of the Soviet people had grown, acknowledged *kurort* officials in 1951; now they demanded to be entertained *and* educated, they were capable of making their own choices, and they expected

a high level of service that acknowledged their dignity as Soviet people. The people themselves were now actors in the pages of the guide to health resorts, and the extensive discussions at all levels of the health spa and tourism administrations confirmed that their desires and preferences needed to be accommodated.

The rise of the skilled leisure consumer was matched by the growing importance in this period of professionalism and experts. Doctors administered their health workshops not as bureaucrats but as skilled professionals. The postwar acknowledgment of the importance of coziness and hospitality was now dressed up in the scientific garb of Pavlov's principles: under socialism, science and expertise were mobilized in service of the people's welfare. Skilled chefs acquired new authority as specialists in nutrition, as psychologists in cossetting vacationers, and in support of the cultural workers who served to expand the horizons of their customers. This period also saw the emergence of the professional mass organizer, the massovik, although investment in cultural expertise still lagged behind that in facilities, medicine, and food.

The period between the end of the war and the death of Stalin in March 1953 is often labeled "high Stalinism," its contours dominated by the xenophobia reflected in Andrei Zhdanov's assault on cultural nonconformity in the late 1940s and the ominous Doctors' Plot of 1953 that portended a new wave of repression and anti-Semitic political violence. The year 1953 constitutes the great break in this chronology. The story of vacations and tourism in the first postwar years, however, owes little to continuities with Stalinism. Leisure travel struggled to reestablish its facilities and priorities in the first years after the war, largely as a result of overwhelming economic shortages. The great turning point after the war in the realm of the provision and consumption of leisure turned out to be 1950. That year's all-union review symbolized a fresh commitment to expand and develop leisure facilities along principles of medical expertise and caring hospitality. Improving economic conditions made greater investments possible, but transformed attitudes on the part of administrators and specialists—a newly confident and empowered postwar generation—also shaped the postwar dynamism. Some of these innovative vacation authorities were able to imagine and suggest changes in the economic organization of their work and invite the application of market-like mechanisms to help improve the provision of leisure travel. Mark B. Smith has noted a similar phenomenon in his study of postwar property relations and housing: the proponents of reform and consumption mobilized their arguments and ideas in the first years after the war and began to implement them after 1950. The system began to change in 1950, well before the death of Stalin.<sup>89</sup>

89. Mark B. Smith, *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev* (DeKalb, IL, 2010), 62–64.

The postwar years reveal the emergence, in work and leisure, of the new Soviet middle class, the intelligentsia. Whether educated in the Stalinist 1930s or in the postwar years of expanding educational opportunities, this group combined its expertise and sense of entitlement to plan different kinds of economic arrangements and to demand them as consumers. The intelligentsia had been quietly consolidating its right to rest in the 1930s in the shadow of the industrial proletariat, who continued to receive official but ineffectual priority. After 1945 and especially after 1950, educated citizens who worked with their minds and not with their hands emerged as the new leading stratum of Soviet society.

## chapter five

# From Treatment to Vacation

## The Post-Stalin Consumer Regime

By 1967 the resort town of Sochi represented the epitome of the Soviet spa vacation. It featured coastline and beaches, the dramatic backdrop of the Caucasus mountain range, subtropical vegetation, and a mild climate the year around. The healing springs of Matsesta were renowned throughout the Soviet Union and abroad. Sochi was home to twenty-one trade union sanatoria, an unreported number of closed Communist Party sanatoria and rest homes, tourist bases, and an increasing number of “creative retreats” for artists and intellectuals.<sup>1</sup> The best sanatoria here served the cream of Soviet society: Stalin vacationed at his dacha in Sochi from the 1930s, and in the 1950s the Party’s central committee and other agencies at the center of power built a closed network of health resorts that received the best supplies and the best service.<sup>2</sup> Sochi’s night life boasted symphonies, theater, film, and a circus, featuring guest appearances by the leading artists of the capitals. Sports celebrities and cosmonauts made Sochi their home for training and recovery. In the 1960s visiting foreign dignitaries from the newly liberated countries of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean ceremoniously planted trees of friendship in the arboretum or the public Park Riviera. The film industry utilized the marble health palaces and lush nature as settings for many feature films.<sup>3</sup>

Sochi’s distinctive welcoming structures—the marble, sandstone, and granite train station and ship terminals built in 1952 and 1955—transformed the monumental style of the 1930s into a fairytale version for the postwar consumer age. The train station’s architect, Aleksei Dushkin, had also designed the fantastical Children’s World department store in Moscow. The ocean

1. *Trud*, 23 June 1961; I.I. Kozlov, ed., *Zdravniitsy profsoiuzov SSSR*, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1967), 95–105.

2. Tour guides were reprimanded for revealing the presence of these closed sanatoria. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 84 (excursion materials for North Caucasus, Estonia, 1947–1948), l. 40.

3. Among the best-loved films set here are the comedies *Kavkazskaia plennitsa, ili novye prikliucheniia Shurika* (*The Woman Prisoner of the Caucasus, or the New Adventures of Shurik*), dir. Leonid Gaidai, Mosfil’m, 1967; and *Brilliantovaia ruka* (*Diamond Arm*), dir. Leonid Gaidai, Mosfil’m, 1968. In August 2010, a statue commemorating *Diamond Arm*’s heroes was unveiled at Sochi’s marine terminal. See <http://www.pravdasochi.ru/?p=761>.



View of 1955 Sochi marine terminal, 2006. Author photograph.



View of 1952 Sochi railway station, 2006. Author photograph.

terminal echoed the style of Moscow's Northern River Port, with elaborate marble inlays and sculptures of Black Sea fauna, topped by a spire that could be seen for miles out to sea. Both structures included exotic Caucasian motifs whose Oriental flavor enticed arriving passengers. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens came to "sun city, city of flowers, the pearl of the south" to receive medical care from the "most miraculous doctors" in the world. In 1965 the city won the honor of "best resort of the Soviet Union."<sup>4</sup>

Sochi epitomized the Soviet vacation as an object of consumer desire, a destination out of this world, a place of wonderment and fantasy. The rituals of the spa regime—mornings for medicine and healing, afternoons for uplifting culture and active sports, evenings for dalliance and fun—set the kurort decisively apart from the daily lives of ordinary and even extraordinary Soviet vacationers. Sochi offered both real and vicarious visitors a kind of secularized pilgrimage to a socialist sacred space. Writing about Tibet, Peter Bishop defines a sacred place "in terms of its separation from the profane world, by the limited access accorded to it, by a sense of dread or fascination, by intimations of order and power, combined with ambiguity and paradox. Sacred places also seem to be located at the periphery of the social world. . . . Rituals accompany the crossing of the threshold, guardians protect the passageway."<sup>5</sup> Access to this sacral Sochi came first of all by the tightly rationed putevka and then by the long train journey; many letter writers affirmed the miraculous healing power of the waters and therapies; the majestic architecture and sublime mountains inspired awe as well as pleasure; the authority of the medical staff reminded visitors of the power of ideas and the state, sacralized by the presentation of the kurort booklet, the ticket to good health. The routine in this magical elsewhere fulfilled Karl Marx's humanistic utopia, in which a person would hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, and criticize after dinner.<sup>6</sup> But far from a mythical no-place, this place existed in concrete and marble reality, to which some lucky million Soviet citizens could gain access every year. They believed in the adage expressed by the heroine of the popular 1980 film *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, which has been much repeated in Soviet and post-Soviet culture: "Everyone must visit Sochi, if only once in their lives."<sup>7</sup>

4. Sergei Tolstoi, *Greater Sochi* (Moscow, 1968), 43, 49; *Trud*, 24 May 1959; 15 February 1961; 12 November 1965.

5. Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley, 1998), 10.

6. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, intro. C. J. Arthur (London, 1970), 53.

7. *Moskva slezam ne verit*, dir. Vladimir Men'shov, Mosfil'm, 1980. The movie quote can be found in [www.life-sochi.ru](http://www.life-sochi.ru), among other places. A 2009 poll reported that one in three Russian citizens has been to Sochi "at least once." All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion, 15 June 2009, [www.rzn.info/news-federal/russia/30116](http://www.rzn.info/news-federal/russia/30116).



### Consumption in Soviet History

Sochi represented the promise of the abundant socialist path to modernity, a consumer's Eden that became increasingly central to the Soviet project in the post-Stalin years. Socialist consumerism had always loomed as a key promise of the revolution, but political and economic decisions in the post-Stalin era expanded access to consumer goods and experiences, creating in effect a new kind of consumer society.<sup>8</sup> Soviet postwar development provided an opportunity for the state to reevaluate its consumption goals and to put in place its own "consumer regime" that could be compared with changing consumer regimes in twentieth-century Europe. Interwar European consumption had been characterized by a "bourgeois" regime based on small-scale retailing and a stratified, class-based access to goods, but this system was supplanted after 1945 (with active involvement by American commercial interests) by what historian Victoria de Grazia labels a "Fordist" consumer regime of low unit costs, standardized goods, high turnover, market research, and consumer choice.<sup>9</sup>

The socialist consumer regime also changed over this period. The hierarchical Stalinist regime rationed access by social position: worthy citizens such as party leaders and exemplary workers received special access to goods, and indeed access defined status.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it promoted the notion that socialism would eventually provide abundance for all. The meaning of "abundance," however, remained open to debate, even if officials in the Khrushchev era and beyond agreed to redirect the economy toward the production of more consumer goods. In the 1930s abundance meant luxury: the champagne and caviar once consumed only by aristocrats would someday be available to all. A socialist form of Fordist consumption might privilege rational, standard, and mass but without the excess attributed to the capitalist marketplace or to aristocratic culture. Certainly design professionals in the 1950s emphasized an austere functionalism in the production of goods for everyday consumption.<sup>11</sup>

The material goods promised and produced also carried symbolic meaning. Under capitalism, theorists argue, consumers purchase goods as much for their sign value—conveying status and identities—as for their utility,

8. Koenker, *Republic of Labor*.

9. Victoria de Grazia, "Changing Consumer Regimes in Europe, 1930–1970: Comparative Perspectives on the Distribution Problem," in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt (Cambridge, 1998), 59–83, and de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

10. Osokina, *Za fasadom "Stalinskogo izobilii"*; Gronow, *Caviar with Champagne*; Hessler, *Social History of Soviet Trade*.

11. Iurii Gerchuk, "The Aesthetics of Everyday Life in the Khrushchev Thaw in the USSR (1954–64)," in *Style and Socialism: Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*, ed. Susan E. Reid and David Crowley (Oxford, 2000), 101–132; Reid, "Khrushchev Modern," 227–268.

or use value, inevitably contributing to production and overproduction of goods in order that some might become the “latest thing.”<sup>12</sup> Rational socialism, however, would avoid this trap of conspicuous consumption through the inculcation of a socialist aesthetic based on utility and simplicity of form. Katherine Verdery argues for an even more fundamental distinction between capitalist and socialist consumption: the tension in authoritarian socialist regimes between legitimating socialist rule through redistributing things to the people and the need to accumulate things at the center in order to maintain power. The paradox implicit in this regime leads necessarily to the stimulation of more demand than socialist economies are allowed to provide, making the consumption of goods an act of individual self-definition, as under capitalist regimes, but also an act of political self-expression.<sup>13</sup>

In the Khrushchev era, household consumption served as a site “for the projection of tomorrow,” writes Susan Reid: Soviet consumers acquired furniture, appliances, and decoration not just for their utility but for their symbolic value. “Regimes of taste,” she writes, “were a means of everyday social positioning and hegemony in which a certain part of the increasingly massive and diverse intelligentsia assumed the prerogative to define legitimate culture.”<sup>14</sup> If the Stalinist consumer regime emphasized hierarchy and looked to an egalitarian future only in promises, in the post-Stalin years, everyone, and not just Stakhanovites, could engage with a consumer regime that offered sufficient abundance to permit choices and self-definition.

The years between the death of Stalin in 1953 and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 cover four decades, a longer span than the period between the 1917 revolution and the end of the Stalin era. The era of Khrushchev and the Thaw has particularly captured the attention of historians who seek to explore the complicated and tortured response to Stalinist authoritarianism. In shorthand political terms, the Thaw included the dismantling of the Stalin-era camp system, the opening of the USSR to the outside world beginning in 1955, and the relaxation of orthodox political controls over literature, history, and many other branches of knowledge and culture. Yet the Party remained the primary and unitary authority, and the legacy of war and Stalin-era repression curbed expectations and instilled a deep fear of the Thaw’s reversal. Many scholars note the incomplete and complex nature of this “thaw” and then observe a new freeze symbolized in 1963 by Khrushchev’s response to an exhibition of modern art and the withdrawal of permission to publish

12. Baudrillard, *Consumer Society*; Douglas and Isherwood, *World of Goods*; and of course, Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*.

13. Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), 26–29.

14. Reid, “Khrushchev Modern,” 243; see also Susan E. Reid, “The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technical Revolution,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (2005): 289–316; and Susan E. Reid, “This is Tomorrow! Becoming a Consumer in the Soviet Sixties,” in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Bloomington, IN, 2013), 25–65.

controversial literary works. The removal of Khrushchev and the ascendancy of Leonid Brezhnev reinforced this cultural paralysis, it is traditionally argued, as limits to free political and cultural expression became ever more tightly drawn. The 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which put an end to that country's experiment with an alternate form of socialism, set the USSR on a firm course of tight political regimentation that endured for another seventeen years, until Mikhail Gorbachev launched his multipronged effort, perestroika, to modernize Soviet socialism.<sup>15</sup>

The history of the Soviet economy and Soviet consumerism, however, does not follow this periodization.<sup>16</sup> Khrushchev's successors may have continued to control political expression, but they sought legitimacy through promises to modernize the economy and to deliver material well-being. Instead of Khrushchev's hare-brained schemes to exploit virgin lands and out-produce the United States in per capita meat consumption, the technocrats under Brezhnev and Aleksei Kosygin encouraged economic reform and new ways to stimulate the economy that would fulfill the consumerist promise of socialism. That path had already been laid out in 1959 with the new seven-year plan that would emphasize the provision of consumer goods: single-family apartments, with furniture and appliances to fill them. The expansion of this socialist consumer regime offered continuing possibilities for "social differentiation, distinction, and self-fashioning." In fact, the high postwar Soviet growth rates had already begun to stall by 1958, stymied by declining rates of labor productivity and increasing inefficiency in the productivity of capital.<sup>17</sup> Although overall output continued to increase, the rate of growth had slowed to 2 percent a year by the end of the 1970s. The rate of growth in personal consumption had peaked in 1958 and then began a steady decline. The inability of the economy to provide goods and services commensurate with expectations became evident in growing lists of deficit commodities. But now a mass consumer society existed, frustrated by shortages, long lines, and the hard work of satisfying its demands through backdoor channels and connections.<sup>18</sup>

Focusing on leisure travel as a target of consumer choice, this chapter traces changes in the consumption of the Soviet spa vacation from the mid-1950s

15. Polly Jones, ed., *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era* (London, 2006); Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca, NY, 2009); Bittner, *Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*.

16. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*; Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*; and Susan Reid in her series of articles.

17. Reid, "Khrushchev Modern," 249 (quote); Moshe Lewin, *Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates: From Bukharin to the Modern Reformers* (Princeton, NJ, 1974), chap. 6; Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy* (London, 2003), chaps. 2–3.

18. Hanson, *Rise and Fall*, 87–88; James R. Millar, "The Little Deal: Brezhnev's Contribution to Acquisitive Socialism," *Slavic Review* 44, no. 4 (1985): 695; see Alena V. Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (Cambridge, 1998), esp. chaps. 1 and 3.

through the 1980s, when its contours had become frozen in economic stagnation and bureaucratic inertia. The expansion of a Soviet vacation available to all citizens appropriately complemented Khrushchev's emphasis on the consumer economy, the fulfillment of the prewar promise that had been put into motion in the immediate postwar period, as discussed in chapter 4. The consumption of leisure also possessed both use value and symbolic value. The vacation would continue to be characterized by its functional benefit, the recovery of good health as a means to return to productive activity. But it also increasingly became a means by which Soviet citizens could express their socialist identity, their aspirations to culture, their aesthetic values, and their worldly knowledge. As the vacation experience became accessible to more and more citizens, the possibilities for choice, differentiation, and distinction also increased. The post-Stalin years thus witnessed the transformation of a Soviet consumer regime from hierarchy to relative abundance that permitted personal choice and distinction. But despite this transformation, the economy's failure to fulfill the promises of the 1960s for greater access to goods produced deep discontent.

This chapter will show that in the decades that bridged de-Stalinization and late socialism, vacationers increasingly valued holidays as commodities to be consumed for pleasure, satisfaction, and self-identification rather than for physical and mental recuperation. The state responded slowly to popular demand, however, most notably in its failure to provide adequate vacation opportunities for married couples and their children. This shortcoming revealed the contradictions between the traditional purpose of the Soviet vacation to provide medical recuperation for working adults and the growing demand by sophisticated Soviet consumers for family vacations as an entitlement of the Soviet good life.

### **Treatment: Soviet Rest and Recuperation**

The creation of the Soviet consumer proceeded haltingly despite the utopian promise of abundance for all, and the continuing development of the Soviet health resort exemplified the uncertainties of the evolving consumer society. The first postwar edition of the guide to Soviet health spas in 1951 had already revealed the contradiction between the words that emphasized the purposeful, rational, and medical nature of kurort vacations and pictures that invited pleasure, sociability, and relaxation. Words mattered, however, and the language of medicine pervaded discussions of health resort planning, both in public and in private. Until 1960, in fact, the Ministry of Public Health controlled the majority of the beds in health resorts. In 1955 a conference of health ministry kurort officials reaffirmed the primacy of medical factors in the allocation of kurort putevki: only those who genuinely needed medical treatment should receive them, and they came with the obligation to fulfill the course of treatment. "I want to emphasize," said Eremenko, the chief of the ministry's health resort bureau, "that our rules should make clear



Kurort guide color plate of the beach at Sukhumi, 1962. S. V. Kurashov, L. G. Gol'dfail', and G. N. Pospelova, eds., *Kurorty SSSR* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo meditsinskoi literatury, 1962), facing page 576.

that kurorts should serve those who are actually ill, and not random people who are accustomed to go to the kurort for their amusement.” The medically needy made their own priorities known in their letters back home to factory newspapers. Their gratitude for a health vacation invariably included the traditional medical results such as regaining one’s health and ability to return to work. “It is no exaggeration to say that some of us came here on crutches but have left completely healthy,” wrote a worker to her Moscow factory newspaper.<sup>19</sup>

Even with the 1960 transfer of almost all health resorts to the Central Trade Union Council (to which I will return), the medical function of the Soviet vacation continued to be emphasized. “No one receives a putevka without going through the medical commission,” insisted the trade union chief A. I. Shevchenko in 1961. The rest home, despite its relaxed medical regime, remained a “school of health” with lectures on the evils of smoking and drinking and lessons in nutrition and hygiene. Physicians continued to administer their sanatoria, and they ardently defended the medical nature of the Soviet vacation. Reacting in 1962 to a proposal that sanatoria could be managed better by lay administrators than by doctors, the head doctor at a Kislovodsk sanatorium insisted, to applause, “In medical institutions the direction must come precisely from a doctor, and only from a doctor.” Ten years later, the head doctor of the Kislovodsk polyclinic affirmed, “Our basic task remains improving the effectiveness of our kurort treatment, and restoring our patients’ ability to work as quickly as possible.”<sup>20</sup>

To be sure, public health posed real challenges to Soviet society well into the second half of the twentieth century. Life expectancy had increased from 46.9 years in 1939 to 69.5 years by 1972 but then began to decline.<sup>21</sup> In 1966, according to the director of one sanatorium complex, as many as 30 percent of military recruits were unfit for service. Improved health and longer life thus remained fundamental purposes of the Soviet vacation into the 1970s.<sup>22</sup>

Healthful mineral springs constituted the centerpiece of the kurort regime, continuing a tradition of continental European and North American

19. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1. d. 916 (kurort directors’ conference, March 1955), ll. 15, 26–28, “I want to emphasize,” l. 97; “It is no exaggeration,” *Martenovka*, 22 May 1958; 10 May 1960; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 9 July 1958.

20. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238 (international socialist conference on health spas, July 1961), ll. 168–169; d. 428 (kurort officials’ conference, April 1963), ll. 87–88; d. 326 (kurort officials’ conference, January 1962), l. 254; d. 1669 (kurort officials’ conference, April 1972), l. 128.

21. *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR za 70 let. Iubileinyi statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow, 1987), 409. This was the first time life expectancy figures had been officially reported since the 1950s. See, e.g., *Zdravookhranenie v SSSR. Statisticheskii spravochnik* (Moscow, 1957), 14.

22. V. N. Avanesov, *Anapa: Sud’ba i zhizn’ moia* (Krasnodar, 2001), 40; *Trud*, 14 January 1965; *Martenovka*, 19 May 1970.



medicine begun in the nineteenth century. But whereas Vichy and Saratoga Springs had been supplanted in the late twentieth century by Club Med and Disneyland, officials insisted on the necessary role of mineral waters in Soviet vacation palaces. The head of the Leningrad Kurort Administration touted the mud and water reserves in the Novgorod region as a reason to invest in new kurort facilities there.<sup>23</sup> Even as Sochi surpassed the Caucasus Mineral Waters group as the most prestigious vacation destination, its identity as an all-union kurort remained linked to its mineral water baths. The discovery of healing springs at nearby Matsesta had given the impetus for the development of Sochi as a holiday destination in 1910, and the connection remained. Matsesta is “the heart of Sochi,” wrote the resort’s first party secretary in 1967, and surrogates elsewhere received the name Siberian Matsesta or Saratov Matsesta, not the Siberian Sochi. A former staff member recalled the miracle of Matsesta in a 2004 interview, describing a visit of Leonid Brezhnev. The general secretary was so crippled that he could ascend the stairway to the bath building only with the support of an aide on each arm, but he emerged a few hours later able to walk unassisted, and he even danced a little jig for the benefit of onlooking staff.<sup>24</sup>

Alongside morning mineral baths, strictly rationed by appointment, Soviet health spa visitors could also expect and came to feel entitled to a whole range of medical therapies. In the immediate postwar years, the main goal had been simply to restore the ravaged medical offices to their prewar functionality. Over the course of the next decades, new medical services entered the standard regime, and older services were upgraded with new technology and equipment: sunlamps, oxygen therapy, and X-ray for diagnostics.<sup>25</sup> Many sanatoria and rest homes had already introduced dental clinics beginning in the 1950s. Toward the end of the 1960s came reports of the use of nuclear medicine, including radioisotope therapy and electrophysiology. By 1972 some sanatoria were offering their patients psychiatric electrotherapy. Kurort doctors in Sochi and Kislovodsk had begun to use Dictaphones in order to free up more time for patient care.<sup>26</sup> Diagnostic and laboratory facilities

23. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227 (kurort officials’ conference, February 1961), l. 18; d. 1669, ll. 26, 160.

24. M. Ia. Rudakov, “Sochi-Matsesta k 20-letniiu Oktabria,” *Voprosy kurortologii*, no. 5 (1937): 37–43; *Trud*, 3 September 1957; S. F. Medunov, “Gorod, kotoryi prinadlezhit vsem,” *Ogonek*, no. 6 (February 1967): 17; *Trud*, 6 March 1969; 30 March 1962; *Sovetskaia imperiia. Sochi (The Soviet Empire: Sochi)*, dir. Elena Kaliberda, Telekanal Rossiia, 2004. I am grateful to Julian Graffy for giving me a copy of this video.

25. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252 (kurort officials’ conference, March 1956), l. 125; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 428, ll. 16, 73; op. 8, d. 326, l. 11; d. 326, l. 348; d. 1088 (kurort officials’ conference, November 1968), l. 6; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 712 (correspondence with *Krasnoe znamia* editors, 1957), l. 1.

26. *Trud*, 25 May 1966; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 1669, ll. 153, 104, 111, 128; d. 2303 (central council on kurort administration, January 1976), l. 73; d. 1088, ll. 48, 59. Psychotherapy was also used to treat resters with bad habits, such as excessive drinking. *Trud*, 29 August 1982.



Vacationers at the Gelendzhik rest home of the State Trade Employees trade union taking sunbaths, 1947. Note the nurse on the right monitoring a pulse. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0–189130. Used with permission of the archive.

also expanded, and some sanatoria began to offer immunological and allergy treatments. By the end of the 1970s, the use of sanatoria for postoperative cardiac care was receiving increased attention. The expansion of medical care also included physical therapy and exercise, labeled “therapeutic physical culture,” a continuing staple of the rest home regime. Morning exercises, gymnastics, walking, and organized sports contests constituted the medical portion of the rest home stay.<sup>27</sup>

With medical science at the core of the kurort regime, the role of medical experts remained central. The expansion of higher education in the Khrushchev years allowed the regime to establish a rule by experts, a demonstration of socialism’s direct inheritance of the Enlightenment spirit of science and reason. The emerging intelligentsia not only became the leading clients of this regime but also made it function. Clearly delineated hierarchies of medical authority in turn created an emotional sense of dependency by vacationers on their skilled medical overseers. Head doctors,

27. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 2303, l. 36; *Trud*, 2 February 1982; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1603 (kurort medical reports, 1968), l. 56; d. 1567 (rest home medical reports, 1959), ll. 18, 86, 97, 117, 123.



Vacationers and medical attendants on the veranda of the Yalta sanatorium of the Ministry of Heavy Industry, July 1958. Photograph by Ginzburg. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0–213579. Used with permission of the archive.

as we have seen, resisted ceding administrative authority to professional managers. The doctor's touch, they avowed, was just as important as sun, air, and mineral water. "Complaints begin on the day that the health place director loses contact with patients and vacationers," insisted the chairman of the trade union of medical workers in 1962. Our sophisticated Soviet vacationers forgive much in the way of shortages, he added, but "they cannot forgive an indifferent attitude on the part of the head doctor."<sup>28</sup> Socialist experts combined science with the human touch. Socialist consumer satisfaction elevated humanism and social interaction above the soulless and lonely accumulation of goods.

"Junior medical personnel"—nurses and orderlies—also played their role in creating the vacationer dependency. Those too ill to engage in vigorous calisthenics could opt for "dosed walking" under the supervision of a nurse. A physician and as many as three and four nurses at a time monitored medical beaches to ensure that recipients of heliotherapy changed positions at

28. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1955 (chemical workers union kurort officials' conference, January 1955), l. 48; op. 8, d. 326, ll. 210–211.

the required intervals and did not get sunburned.<sup>29</sup> Vacationers confirmed their gratitude for the “help, attention, advice, and motherly regard” from the medical staff in sanatorium comment books. Doctors drew praise, often by name, for their “humanism” and willingness to help their patients. Gratitude for the medical staff’s “considerate approach” (*chutkoe otnoshenie*) appeared in nearly every comment. The vacationers’ improved health, acknowledged in these comments, could have occurred only through the care and attention of the doctors and nurses.<sup>30</sup>

### Vacation: Add Fun and Stir

Alongside this medical regime, growing attention to pleasure and recreation found expression in the kurort experience. Occasionally authorities would question the wisdom and efficacy of the lavish expenditures on medical infrastructure. The Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 licensed a review of practices in many parts of Soviet society, and the kurort regime was no exception. Perhaps it was time to change the standardized terms of treatment, which had not been reviewed in fifteen years, suggested one doctor. The transfer of kurort affairs from the health ministry to the trade unions in 1960 might have provided an opportunity to rethink the emphasis on medicine, but the transfer produced no change. When a Hungarian health official questioned the heavy staffing requirements of the Soviet kurort regime at an international conference in 1961, Soviet officials defended their practices. It would be unthinkable to alter the Sochi staff ratio of 250 personnel for 350 vacationers: “Our task is to relieve our patients from all manner of concerns,” and “We don’t have the right to reduce the care we give to our laboring people.” In 1976, as the Kurort Administration looked ahead to a new five-year plan, the central trade union secretary, Shalaev, confirmed the preeminence of medicine but suggested that it was time to rethink the balance: we have devoted too much attention to medical sanatoria in the last five years, he argued; we cannot continue to rely on forms of vacation that were developed in 1925. Working people of today have new needs and new demands.<sup>31</sup>

29. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 210–211, 14; *Trud*, 19 June 1973; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238, l. 180; GAGS, f. R-178, op. 1, d. 36 (Raduga sanatorium medical report, 1954), l. 25; f. 214, op. 1, d. 72 (coal industry ministry sanatorium medical report, 1953), l. 37.

30. I sampled comment books from the Raduga (Rainbow) sanatorium in Sochi. Comments were often written on behalf of groups rather than by individuals, and they are remarkable for the sameness of the words and sentiments. We should not, however, dismiss the sincerity of the emotions they represent just because they appear to fit a particular template of gratitude. GAGS, f. 178, op. 1, d. 95 (1962) and d. 53 (1958). Dentists in particular drew more criticism than other types of medical staff. After the medical staff, waitresses received the most grateful mentions.

31. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, l. 16; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238, ll. 141–42, 178–180; d. 2303, ll. 202, 207.

The ever-growing demand by Soviet citizens to spend their vacations away from home in leisure pursuits included new expectations about the quality of the vacation experience. Vacationers continued to value professional and solicitous medical attention, as we have seen. Officials also acknowledged that the increasingly sophisticated leisure consumers expected better service and a greater variety of activities in which to engage during their nontreatment hours. If the medical side of the vacation emphasized dependency, the leisure side privileged consumer agency, and health spa officials worked hard to accommodate the new needs and demands. As always, these involved a fragile balance between didactic cultural uplift and pure fun and release. The Soviet vacation became not just a reward for work well done but a space of personal self-development.

The southern shores of the Soviet Union remained the destination of choice for the emblematic vacation, memorialized in the 1957 film *To the Black Sea*, in which one protagonist, an eminent Moscow professor, confessed that his life's dream was "to drive to the Black Sea in my own car." The film proceeds to chart a romantic comedy of errors with the Black Sea as its destination and backdrop: a caravan of automobiles transits the adventurous road to Crimea, and cars driven by two males seeking the love of the same silly coed careen repeatedly past an apocryphal road sign that reads, "Crimea—this way; Caucasus—that way."<sup>32</sup>

The dream of one's own car remained only that for most prospective Soviet automobilists: the density of automobile ownership in the USSR in 1977 was 26 per 1,000 people, rising only to 45 per 1,000 in 1985. By contrast, the level in the United States in the 1970s was 426 cars per 1,000 people. For almost all Soviet vacationers, then, the journey to the south took place by rail, a trip from Moscow to Simferopol or Sochi that took more than thirty-six hours. In 1960, 530,000 visitors to Sochi traveled by train, compared with 60,000 by sea and 40,000 by air. Automobiles did not even receive mention.<sup>33</sup> The train journey from Siberia and the Far East took between twelve and twenty days in each direction, making the favored southern watering spots virtually inaccessible for those outside European Russia.<sup>34</sup> The kurort journey also posed its own peculiar challenges for vacationers. The railway authorities did not sell round-trip tickets, and even a one-way ticket could not be bought until the prospective passenger had presented a kurort putevka. Only after arriving at his or her destination could the traveler purchase a return ticket by presenting a kurort booklet, and then only ten days before the intended departure date. The rise of air travel in the 1960s made long-distance travel

32. *K chernomu moriu*, dir. Andrei Tutyshkin, Mosfil'm, 1957.

33. Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (Ithaca, NY, 2008), 239–240; *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 18 May 1961 (hereinafter LG), 2.

34. V.I. Azar, *Otdykh trudiashchikhsia SSSR* (Moscow, 1972), 9. Vasilii Shukshin's 1972 film, *Pechki-lavochki* (*Happy-Go-Lucky*), Gor'kii Film Studios, traces just one Siberian couple and the adventures they encounter on their rail journey to the south, via Moscow (all routes went through Moscow).



more affordable, but access to air tickets required the same kind of red tape as the trains.<sup>35</sup>

The staple nonmedical activities for rest homes and sanatoria had long been and would remain watching films and dancing to live or recorded music. Many vacationers, however, had complained about the monotony of this regime, and kurort officials continued to worry that cultural activities focused too much on amusement and not enough on raising the cultural levels of those who visited their establishments. The horizons opened by the Twentieth Party Congress but particularly by the Twenty-Second Congress in 1961 brought new urgency and energy to the task of using vacation facilities to educate the whole person.<sup>36</sup> Toward the end of the 1950s and continuing throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Soviet vacationers could expect that their leisure days and hours would bring cultural uplift and knowledge as well as fun.

The patriotic content of vacation cultural activities reinforced the continuing close connection between the interests of the Soviet state and its leisure practices. Even before the cult of World War II assumed a leading place in state policy during Brezhnev's term of office, a new emphasis on patriotic and historical appreciation began to appear at the end of the 1950s, particularly around the Moscow region. The cultural activities of Soviet health spas also reflected a growing interest among the intellectuals in ethnic Russian tradition, an interest that would be expressed in literature's "village prose" movement.<sup>37</sup> The rest home Communicator in Zvenigorod, an area that had once relied on its natural beauty ("the Russian Switzerland"), now began to emphasize its long historical pedigree as well, including monuments of religious and military significance. A rest home in Kalinin oblast also reported that its vacationers now took walks to historical places such as monasteries and bell towers and traveled by bus to see the restored eleventh-century architecture of Novgorod. Another rest home reported as "new" for 1959 evening campfires in the woods, with veterans sharing stories of the local war effort. The director of the Blue Lake home boasted in 1961 of even more

35. On one experience, see M. V. Rabinovich, *Vospominaniia dolgoi zhizni* (St. Petersburg, 1996), 343; on difficulties, *Trud*, 13 May 1962. See also Christian Noack, "Coping with the Tourist: Planned and 'Wild' Mass Tourism on the Soviet Black Sea Coast," in Gorsuch and Koenker, *Turizm*, 299. A 2001 guidebook to the Black Sea coast notes the continuing problem of return travel: "The hard thing in traveling to Black Sea kurorts is not to get there but to fly out on the expected day. Return tickets in peak season are not available." *Chernomorskoe poberezh'e Kavkaza ot Tuapse do Adlera. Putevoditel'* (Moscow, 2001), 19. I was able to buy two round-trip tickets from Moscow to Adler in 2006 through Expedia and a Moscow travel agency, but to be sure, this was in the off-peak part of the year.

36. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, ll. 12, 9; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498 (correspondence with *Krasnoe znamia* editors, 1954), l. 99; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 229–241. This goal was enshrined in the program adopted at the Twenty-Second Party Congress: *Programma kommunisticheskoi partii sovetskogo soiuza priniata XXII s"ezdom KPSS* (Moscow, 1962) (see next chapter).

37. On the cult of the war, see Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in the USSR* (New York, 1994), 134–146. On village prose, see Kathleen Parthé, *Russian Village Prose: The Radiant Past* (Princeton, NJ, 1992).



elaborate attention to historical tradition, having turned his health place into a kind of Russian theme park. The customary Russian greeting of bread and salt, served on embroidered towels, “the symbol of Russian friendship,” greeted vacationers, who could then take tea from a samovar following the afternoon rest hour. On the sports field, visitors participated in Russian folk games and horseback riding “because all Russians love to ride horses.” The swimming beach featured a rolling barrel and a tame bear, and birthday men and women received a special pastry, presented to the accompaniment of Russian folk songs. The buildings here also adopted the style appropriate to the “glorious tradition of the Russian people.”<sup>38</sup>

Khrushchev’s 1961 promise, “This generation of Soviet people will live under Communism,” emerged as a central goal of the 1960s kurort agenda. A Communist person would be cultured, and the trade union vacation enterprises now devoted new attention to raising the cultural and aesthetic consciousness of its visitors. Music appreciation received a boost with the increased availability of record players. “Listening to ‘Evgeni Onegin’ or ‘La Traviata’ makes me think I am in ‘another world,’ in the Bolshoi Theater,” wrote one grateful vacationer in 1961. Musical salons included phonograph concerts, lectures, visits from touring composers and artists, and also “Favorite Songs of Lenin.” By 1975 vacationers in provincial Ivanovo could hear concerts by the local philharmonic; in the Krasnodar oblast (which included Sochi), vacationers were treated to productions of Giuseppe Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, and Ruggiero Leoncavallo’s *I Pagliacci* by the touring Sverdlovsk Opera Theater, as well as lectures on composers and artists such as Dmitrii Shostakovich and David Oistrakh.<sup>39</sup>

The burgeoning Soviet economy of the late 1950s and early 1960s helped finance the regime’s newly prominent cultural mission, and rising standards of living provided Soviet consumers with the means to access these cultural products. The expansion of an art book industry provided new possibilities for art appreciation. Saratov sanatorium vacationers enjoyed their “days of art,” with lectures on individual artists such as the Russians Il’ia Repin, Viktor Vaznetsov, and Vasilii Surikov; lessons in how to look at a painting; and lectures on “Marxist-Leninist aesthetics.” Vacationers from Tula lavished praise on such opportunities in 1975: “We seldom visit Moscow and Leningrad, and we don’t have the possibility to see the paintings of old Russian masters and Soviet artists. We don’t go to Tula art exhibitions at home because after work we’re tired, and on weekends we have other things to do. But here at the sanatorium, we have the free time and pleasure to become acquainted with art.”<sup>40</sup>

38. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1567, ll. 109, 46, 40; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 124–131.

39. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 234–237 (quote, l. 237); d. 428, l. 76; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1603, l. 114; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 2258 (report on mass cultural work, 1975), ll. 18–20.

40. Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*; “We seldom visit,” GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 2258, l. 21.

An increasing array of “theme days,” lectures and presentations, exhibitions, and participatory quiz shows added social and political purpose to the medical restoration offered by the kurort vacation. An evening in which patients shared information about the “city where I live” broke the ice and helped them get to know one another but also to know more about their native land. In Moscow-region rest homes and sanatoria, cultural officials recognized that vacationers came with different interests and needed a full menu of activities from which to choose. In 1968 these included evenings devoted to literature and art, a celebration of the Komsomol’s fiftieth anniversary, puzzle-lovers’ clubs, excursions to battle sites of the Great Patriotic War, flower-arranging exhibitions, and stamp-collecting groups. In the run-up to the hundredth anniversary of Lenin’s birth in 1970, the cultural repertoire had added special Lenin content to musical evenings, literary events, excursion plans, and film series.<sup>41</sup> Televisions appeared increasingly in the public rooms of rest homes and sanatoria, and evening programs in sanatorium clubs echoed much of the content of Soviet television of the 1960s and 1970s. Vacationers had long enjoyed viktorinas; now they could also watch popular quiz shows on television and reenact them during their vacation stays. In the mid-1970s Soviet sociologists began to worry about channeling young people into proper professions: Soviet television addressed the problem with a game show designed to showcase various trades, and at kurorts, vacationers could judge competitions for the best waitress or the best cook or celebrate holidays of professions by attending performances by the feted group on the “Day of the Miner” or “Day of Teachers.” Naval Day would be celebrated in Tuapse with a Neptune Festival and parade down the main street of the seaside town.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike their predecessors in the early postwar years—when the cultural content of most kurort vacations consisted of old movies, stale amateur concerts, dancing, and games produced from the cultural organizer’s book of *365 Games and Leisure Hours*—Soviet vacationers could now expect a much fuller cultural and medical experience during their stays away from home.<sup>43</sup> But all these new activities remained directed toward education and mobilization, healing the body and elevating the mind. The idea of pleasure for its own sake, as an antidote to the permanent mobilization citizens experienced during their working months, did not appear on the agenda of the vacation officials. Socialist consumption of leisure would be rational and purposeful, and that in itself should be pleasure and purpose both.

41. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 428, ll. 27, 16; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1603, ll. 102–126.

42. Murray Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union: Six Studies* (White Plains, NY, 1977), chap. 4; Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Public and Private Life of the Soviet People: Changing Values in Post-Stalin Russia* (Oxford, 1989), 41; Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*, chap. 5; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 2258, ll. 15–16.

43. On complaints about boring evenings, see GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498 (1954), l. 99; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, ll. 134–135 (1956); GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1982 (sanatoria and rest homes conference on cultural work, June–July 1949), l. 31; *Trud*, 18 April 1958.

For their part, Soviet vacationers continued to expect comfortable living conditions, attentive service, and tasty food. They also began to pay more attention to commodities that would help them enjoy their vacations. Although self-service restaurants lowered costs and reduced time spent in dining, vacationers preferred to be served: “We come to rest here only once a year, so let them serve us our dinner at the table, we don’t want to carry our plate to the table ourselves.” They asked for services such as barbers, shoe repair, intercity telephone exchanges, and laundry, and they also spoke out in favor of opportunities to rent bicycles, dishes, water toys, musical instruments, televisions, and radios for the duration of their vacations. They complained when food was boring, and they increasingly appreciated local variations in menus. The chefs who had met in 1950 to discuss expanding culinary horizons had done their work well. An Odessa rest home boasted about the popularity of its house-made salads and stuffed vegetables; a Tataria rest home held a contest in 1961 for the best new dishes and subsequently added items like stewed meat with plums and *azu* Tatar style (another stew) to its offerings. Vacationers also began to demand better supplies of “vacation goods”: bathing suits, sunglasses, men’s summer shirts, and women’s wraparound sarafans.<sup>44</sup> Spending time in the sun and fresh air and improving one’s health were not enough; the new Soviet consumer now expected a proper vacation to include the acquisition of material goods as well as an extra four kilograms of body weight.

The source of these rising expectations included the party’s own promises about the consumer’s road to communism, which permeated public culture in the press, television, radio, and film. Khrushchev’s seven-year plan, begun in 1959, explicitly targeted growth in the consumer goods sector. Moreover, the complaint book had long been a sacrosanct instrument for consumers to communicate their demands to authorities, and it continued to instruct officials about their successes and failings.<sup>45</sup> Local officials compiled complaints and forwarded them to central officials. “Every complaint must be reviewed, and the guilty should be punished,” admonished the trade union kurort boss I.I. Kozlov in 1976.<sup>46</sup> The trade union newspaper *Trud* regularly surveyed letters from vacationers and reported on the information they conveyed about what was good but mostly what needed to change. Kozlov would often relay the most salient complaints in his annual reports to kurort directors as a way to encourage improvements, and these speeches were regularly reported in the press. So it was no

44. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238, l. 180; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 712, ll. 33, 59; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1567, l. 18; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 957 (central kurort administration meetings, June 1967), l. 14; d. 326, ll. 112, 389; *Trud*, 19 June 1973; 30 June 1960; 20 September 1974.

45. N.B. Lebina and A.N. Chistikov, *Obyvatel' i reformy: Kartiny povsednevnoi zhizni gorozhan* (St. Petersburg, 2003); Reid, “Khrushchev Modern”; Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.* (Harmondsworth, UK, 1972), 354–356; Marjorie L. Hilton, “The Customer Is Always Wrong: Consumer Complaint in Late-NEP Russia,” *Russian Review* 68, no. 1 (2009): 1–25; and above, chapter 1.

46. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 2303, l. 65.



Recreational boat rides at Sochi, from the 1962 kurort guide. S. V. Kurashov, L. G. Gol'dfai', and G. N. Pospelova, eds., *Kurorty SSSR* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo meditsinskoi literatury, 1962), facing page 208.

state secret that Soviet vacationers remained disappointed in the level of service they received or the food they consumed during their holidays, and vacationers could also infer from these reports that they were entitled to something better. The gradual shift in vacations from a welfare benefit provided by the state to a leisure commodity purchased by a consumer led eventually, if belatedly, to the transformation of Soviet health-based vacationing into something resembling a business but one that produced services rather than goods.

## The Business of Soviet Vacations

Since the end of the war in 1945, Soviet trade union and health officials had worked to expand the network of health spas and to increase access, so that the right to rest could be utilized by the maximum number of deserving individuals. Table 5.1 indicates the considerable success in health place investment. According to official figures, the annual usage by Soviet citizens grew from 3.7 million in 1950 to 16.8 million in 1970 to 40 million by 1980. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the greatest growth, both numerically and in terms of the percentage of the population served by the trade union and other spas and rest homes. Even if the figures, which vary from source to source, cannot be entirely believed, they do suggest that an annual trip to an organized place of rest had become an increasingly common element in Soviet life. But as trade union officials admitted year after year, this expansion, however laudable, could not keep pace with demand that increased even faster.<sup>47</sup> The Soviet standard of living continued to rise as more of the population moved to cities and earned higher wages. Vacation time had increased: in 1968 the normal annual paid leave lengthened from twelve workdays to fifteen, and at the same time, the two-day weekend took effect. The typical Soviet working person could now expect an annual three-week vacation. The development of air transportation shortened the journey to distant health resorts and made them accessible to more of the population.<sup>48</sup> Soviet urban consumers had acquired a taste for travel as well as the resources, both cultural and financial, to indulge it.

**Table 5.1** Health vacationers and population in the USSR, 1950–1986

Year	Vacationers	Population	Resters per 1,000 population
1950	3,785,000	181,600,000 (1951)	20.8
1960	6,744,000	208,800,000 (1959)	32.3
1970	16,838,000	241,700,000	69.7
1980	40,040,000	262,400,000 (1979)	152.6
1986	50,306,000	278,800,000	180.4

*Sources:* For 1950 vacationers, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1974* (Moscow, 1975), 616–617. For the 1960–86 vacationers, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR za 70 let. Iubileinyi statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow, 1987), 602. For population, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR za 70 let*, 373, and *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1973 g.* (Moscow, 1974), 7.

47. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 916, ll. 16, 95; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, l. 121; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 4 (correspondence and reports on kurort development, July–December 1960), l. 10; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 6, 218; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 104, 309; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 698 (central kurort administration meetings, June 1965), ll. 20–24; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 1669, ll. 95, 158.

48. Azar, *Otdykh*, 6–9.

### The Economy of Shortages

The Soviet spa vacation became one more deficit item in the growing socialist economy of shortages. Their increased demand pitted Soviet consumers directly against the economy's structural inability to respond to it. The history of the Soviet deficit economy has been well documented by theorists and contemporary social scientists as well as by the cartoonists at the humor magazine *Krokodil'*, by thundering official speeches assigning blame, and by the hand-wringing of the new intelligentsia assigned to resolve problems of central planning.<sup>49</sup> The business of Soviet spa vacations provides a microhistory of this fundamental feature of Soviet economic decision making.

Two features of vacation consumption exacerbated the growing shortfall between demand and supply: the seasonality and the geographic concentration of consumer preferences. Since the 1920s, vacation officials had tried to encourage utilization of rest homes and sanatoria in winter as well as summer. To build elaborate infrastructure and facilities that stood idle three, six, or eight months a year constituted impermissible waste in the rationally planned economy. Qualified staff could not be found for seasonal work; building housing for staff who worked only three months in the year could not be justified. Yet Soviet consumers wanted to take their vacations in summer. A 1965 study indicated that nearly half of the urban population took their vacations in July and August, another 20 percent in May and June.<sup>50</sup> Summer congestion imposed additional burdens: long waits for everything from train tickets to meals to mineral water baths.

Congestion peaked in the favorite vacation spots along the Black Sea: from Odessa to Crimea and along the Caucasus Black Sea coast from Anapa to the southern border of Georgia. The development of beachside complexes on the Baltic Sea attracted an increasing flow of vacationers to the Lithuanian and Latvian republics, but these resorts did not diminish popular demand for the sun and sea in the south. By the 1970s, officials supported the development of new kurort regions in Siberia, the Far East, and Central Asia, and they also placed new emphasis on the construction of vacation complexes in forested areas closer to large industrial cities. Lake Seliger, an expansive region of waterways and forest in Kalinin oblast between Moscow and Leningrad, remained accessible only to intrepid tourists until the 1960s, when plans to develop rest homes and spas began to receive support. In 1961 officials addressed the huge excess demand for a Sochi vacation by dramatically expanding the city limits of the resort town, creating a "Greater Sochi" that extended 140 kilometers along the coast from just south of Tuapse to the border with the Georgian republic. The new designation

49. Lewin, *Political Undercurrents*; James R. Millar, *The ABCs of Soviet Socialism* (Urbana, IL, 1981); Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours*. The classic theoretical analysis is by János Kornai, *Economics of Shortage* (Amsterdam, 1980). Most recently, the Soviet economy at the end of the 1950s has become the stuff of fiction: Francis Spufford, *Red Plenty* (London, 2010).

50. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498, l. 80; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 35–37; d. 238, l. 188; d. 2303, l. 110; Azar, *Otdykh*, 48.



spurred the development of kurort-cities with the same sea and mountain amenities offered by central Sochi while reducing congestion in the main part of the city.<sup>51</sup> It also immediately extended the cachet of a Sochi vacation to a much larger group of consumers.

In theory, the putevka allocation system regulated both timing and destination. Central kurort officials calculated the capacities of the various resorts and distributed the appropriate number of putevki to various trade unions and other offices so that every place would be fully utilized. This system presumed a perfect flow of information about resources. In practice, agencies that controlled their own sanatoria and rest homes restricted access by underreporting the availability of spaces so that they would always have some to spare if especially deserving people needed a room.<sup>52</sup> Other health places, concerned about the penalties they would incur if they did not fill all their rooms, overbooked their spaces to guard against vacationers who failed to show up, arrived late, or had to be sent home because their medical conditions did not warrant treatment at that particular place. When the health spas guessed wrong, which frequently happened in the summer, vacationers could find themselves lodged in doctors' offices and in corridors because there were not enough rooms for all those with legitimate putevki. In the winter, however, putevki often remained unused; rest homes and sanatoria operated at a loss because vacationers chose not to come.<sup>53</sup>

Very much aware of the gap between the desire of citizens to vacation in summer and the availability of places, kurort officials responded to the economic challenges in a number of ways. Increasing investment in kurort facilities—whether to expand in traditional or new areas or to upgrade existing facilities—dominated discussions in the Kurort Administration from the 1940s until the last days of the Soviet Union. But where would these investment funds come from in an economy that also faced agricultural shortfalls and growing needs to invest in science, technology, and other kinds of consumer goods? Individual enterprises and agencies possessed reserves of discretionary funds to spend on improving living conditions for their employees, including building apartments and subsidizing vacations. In March 1960 the Communist Party Central Committee and the USSR Council of Ministers directed that the administration of all health resorts and rest homes would immediately pass from the Ministry of Health to the Central Trade Union Council. Individual enterprises that had built their own health places were required to turn them over to the central council, but they would retain the right to use 75 percent of the putevki for those facilities. These incentives encouraged agencies and enterprises to continue to invest their own enterprise funds in building new facilities.<sup>54</sup>

51. Azar, *Otdykh*, 53; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 1669, l. 198; d. 2303, l. 43; d. 227, ll. 91–92; d. 326, l. 276; *LG*, 3 February 1962, 4.

52. V.I. Azar, *Ekonomika i organizatsiia turizma (Metodologicheskie voprosy)* (Moscow, 1972), 35.

53. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 428, l. 68; d. 227, ll. 35–37; d. 2303, l. 61; *Trud*, 20 August 1966; 4 July 1973.

54. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 4, ll. 10–15. On “private” health places, *Trud*, 24 April 1960.

Planners also proposed creating new differentiations among vacation destinations in order to channel demand away from the capital- and service-intensive sanatoria toward more simple and varied types of facilities. The standard stay at a sanatorium remained fixed at twenty-six days. Rest homes continued to serve hundreds of thousands of vacationers, who utilized the typical twelve-day putevka for healthy and active leisure, often near their places of residence. The 1960s saw the expansion of the pansion, a flexible form of vacation complex, consisting of sleeping quarters and attached dining and entertainment halls: they might or might not offer medical services (through cooperation with a kurort's polyclinic). Pansions could accommodate as many as four thousand visitors at a time, whose stays could range from one to four weeks.<sup>55</sup> The 1980 film *From the Lives of Vacationers* depicts one such Black Sea pansion in the autumn off-season, where world-weary vacationers amuse themselves in the hours between morning seaside calisthenics (to the relentless accompaniment of an accordion player), monotonous meals ("kasha again?") served on white tablecloths by officious uniformed waitresses, and evenings of Gypsy music in the klub. Rest homes remained even smaller in scale and more primitive in services. With their dormitory-type sleeping facilities, notoriously poor food, and lack of amenities, they had become less attractive to the increasingly discriminating Soviet vacation consumer. In 1970, rest homes and pansions served a combined 4.77 million vacationers, while 3.38 million availed themselves of treatments at sanatoria. Of the three, only the sanatorium received subsidies from state insurance and medical funds. The pansion and the rest home were required to observe the principle of cost accounting, balancing their income (the value of the putevki of the visitors who actually arrived) against expenditures. Differentiation by type and price also served to address the excesses of demand: a twelve-day stay at an ordinary rest home cost thirty rubles in the 1960s, but the highest category of rest home charged twice that price. Twelve days in the highest-category pansion cost eighty rubles.<sup>56</sup>

The transfer of health vacation responsibility to the trade unions provided new opportunities for individual enterprises and organizations to construct their own facilities. Economic reform designed to make rational use of public resources opened the door to new forms of consumer distinction. Many of the so-called artistic unions (for composers, writers, architects, etc.) built "creative houses" in the most desirable resort locations, offering proprietary and upscale versions of the typical rest home.<sup>57</sup> Individual industrial enterprises also negotiated with local governments and construction firms to erect

55. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 4, l. 13; Azar, *Otdykh*, 33.

56. *Iz zhizni otdykhaiushchikh*, dir. Nikolai Gubenko, Mosfil'm, 1980; *Trud*, 25 May 1966; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, l. 381; Azar, *Otdykh*, 14, 30–34.

57. For the architect M. I. Rudomino, the creative house of the union of architects was his "second home." *Knigi moei sud'by* (Moscow, 2005), 302. See also L. Vertinskaia, *Siniia ptitsa liubvi* (Moscow, 2004), 321–323; L. Lazarev, *Zapiski pozhilogo cheloveka* (Moscow, 2005), 419–420.

pansions, sanatoria, and rest homes for restricted use. In the mid-1960s, a new form appeared alongside the pansion—the hotel, in which medical vacationers could receive food and lodging while taking the cure at a nearby sanatorium. Generally, those who sought medical treatment without having a putevka to a sanatorium—the *kursovniki*—had found lodging with private landlords in places like Yalta and Sochi. Socialist hotels would put these private arrangements out of business.<sup>58</sup> At the other end of the luxury spectrum, individual factories built their own “rest bases,” with simple facilities but accessible to workers and employees who were unable to secure a putevka to one of the more elaborate places of vacation. Leningrad’s Skorokhod shoe factory built such a base eighty-seven miles to the south in Luga, from which reports regularly appeared in the factory newspaper, *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*.

### Playing the Market

A more controversial solution to the problem of unmet demand for vacation facilities paralleled the economic innovations under discussion in Soviet society throughout the 1960s: the application of market-like mechanisms to channel demand and provide better signals for kurort planning. A new generation of economists was now studying capitalist economic principles and advocated using the notion of profit to provide better information to Soviet planners and to improve incentives for managers. In 1965 the Khar'kov economist Evsei Liberman had attracted international attention when the Party leadership adopted some of his reforms.<sup>59</sup> Assessing the economic costs of the putevka had always been complicated, with so many factors going into the value of a vacation. Reformers now suggested that variable pricing, or discounts, be adopted to encourage vacationers to take up putevki in the less popular months. Some officials, however, resisted this reform, worried more about the notional “surplus” eroded by the discounted putevka than the opportunity to fill all their spaces in the off-season.<sup>60</sup>

Proposals to put the distribution of putevki on a more commercial basis accompanied the transfer of the Health Resort Administration to the trade unions. The central trade unions distributed putevki to individual unions and then to enterprise committees. Giving away 20 percent of their putevki to deserving workers at no charge, local committees sold the rest to workers at 30 percent of their stated value. Social insurance funds that were part of every enterprise’s operating budget paid the difference. At the start of the 1960s, the insurance fund subsidized between 85 and 90 percent of all putevki,

58. *Trud*, 9 February 1963. Expansion was denounced in this article for its lack of planning and aesthetics. See also *Trud*, 12 November 1965; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 66–70; d. 428, l. 22.

59. Lewin, *Political Undercurrents*, chap. 6. Liberman’s face appeared on the cover of *Time Magazine*, 12 February 1965.

60. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 35–37; d. 1669, l. 108; d. 326, ll. 255, 317; d. 238, l. 144; Azar, *Ekonomika*, 130.

although everyone recognized that people or enterprises that did not pay for their own putevki were more likely to end up not using them, wasting resources.<sup>61</sup> The growing demand by Soviet citizens for access to vacation spots encouraged officials to think about the extra revenue they could generate by selling more putevki for cash. And Soviet people had cash. One Western economist estimates that that between 1975 and 1985 savings grew 9.3 percent, while consumption grew by only 4.6 percent. Savings grew because there was so little to buy. One proposal in 1961 advocated setting aside nine sanatoria and eight rest homes for the sale of putevki at full cost; another suggested reserving up to 25 percent of putevki for cash sales. The money received in exchange could then be invested directly in the expansion of kurort facilities.<sup>62</sup>

As with proposals for off-peak pricing differentials, such quasi-capitalist propositions did not sit well with many trade union officials, and they managed to quietly shelve plans to convert trade union health facilities into commercial enterprises. The return to a 1920s system of a mixed public-private economy found supporters within the economic establishment, but it generated enemies among the managers and trade union apparatus.<sup>63</sup> Instead of rationing the scarce vacation facilities by price, officials continued to distribute them in the socialist manner, which was felt to be more equitable. Soviet consumers agreed: when asked whether the state or consumers should finance the expansion of the kurort network, a 1966 poll revealed that 30 percent of respondents thought consumers should pay, even if this meant raising the prices of putevki, but 45 percent of respondents insisted the state should provide all funds for vacation development.<sup>64</sup> In the meantime, since the state was not living up to its responsibility, those with the ability to pay for their own vacations turned increasingly to opportunities outside the trade union system, fueling the rise of “unorganized” or “wild” vacationing, to which I will return.

Along with market-like reforms came new methods of market research so that Soviet planners could better determine the tastes and demands of the growing consumer public. In 1966 the planning institute in charge of kurort construction commissioned a poll by the public opinion group operated by *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, the only “commercial” poll ever undertaken by that group. The results suggested that Soviet citizens wanted more opportunities to vacation with their families and that most of them preferred a traveling vacation to spending the entire time in one place. At the same time, *Trud* sponsored its own survey on popular preferences for vacations. Both polls relied on the voluntary responses of readers. In contrast to 72 percent of the

61. Azar, *Ekonomika*, 144; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 1088, l. 34.

62. Ed A. Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy: Equality versus Efficiency* (Washington, DC, 1988), 88; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 4, l. 14; d. 227, l. 226.

63. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 1669, l. 154; see Lewin, *Political Undercurrents*.

64. B. A. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii v zerkale oprosov obshchestvennogo mneniia. Epokha Brezhneva*, pt. 1 (Moscow, 2003), 159.

Komsomol respondents who preferred tourist vacations, 76 percent of *Trud*'s participants said they wanted to spend their vacation in a pansion or a rest home.<sup>65</sup> This result reaffirmed trade union authorities' insistence on expanding traditional health vacation facilities, allowing them to ignore the preferences expressed in the poll of readers of the Komsomol newspaper, who represented a more educated, urban, and youthful subsection of the Soviet public.

Individual kurort operators also frequently engaged in market-like activities, early signs of the "second economy" that would increasingly fill in the gaps left by the failures of central planning. Underfunded rest homes would rent space for cash, contributing to the general problem of overcrowding but gaining in this way much-needed operating funds. Another rest home used its savings to build small fishing and hunting lodges, using the surplus to improve services for other vacationers. Local officials in Sochi on their own initiative reorganized their hotels, eliminating the infamous *dezurnye*, the women who controlled the room keys and monitored each floor, freeing more money for services (and liberating guests to come and go as they pleased). They also opened themed restaurants such as The Old Mill, where the wait staff dressed as a miller and his daughters, and Caucasian Village, serving shashlik and Georgian wine. "We shouldn't fear the word 'enterprise,'" wrote the head of the Sochi Communist Party branch describing these attractions. "We should applaud such enterprise, which brings profit to the state and joy to its citizens."<sup>66</sup>

Ultimately such primitive socialist accumulation could not generate the massive amounts of capital needed to meet the ever-growing demand for vacations in summer and in the south. Trade union officials continued to expect the central state to allocate the resources for every need from large to small. Directors of provincial health resort administrations traveled to Moscow every year for their annual meetings with their begging bowls in hand to seek subsidies from the center. In response to advice that the Latvian republic should use its own funds to expand resort facilities on the Baltic Sea, its kurort administrator replied that since most of its vacationers came from other republics, the country as a whole, not just his republic, should pay for its expansion. The director of the Far East Kurort Administration received prolonged applause for insisting that funds for expansion should go first of all to local kurorts like his, not to the well-established centers like Sochi, Kislovodsk, and Piatigorsk. "They can do very well at their own expense," he proclaimed. But the head doctor at one Kislovodsk sanatorium replied the

65. Ibid.; *Trud*, 21 June 1967. The survey questions were published 10 July 1966. Other surveys were carried out by the Plekhanov Economics Institute and the State Committee on Prices; Azar's *Ekonomika*, 4–5, and *Otdykh*, 4, relied on these sources.

66. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, l. 92; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 428, ll. 30–32; "We shouldn't fear," S. F. Medunov, "Gorod, kotoryi prinadlezhit vsem," *Ogonek*, no. 6 (February 1967): 16–18.

following year that his institution was just as needy as everyone else. And every year the needs continued to mount: more money for staff, equipment, repair, expansion, food, a swimming pool, an airport.<sup>67</sup>

When the Central Trade Union Council took over the administration of health places in 1960, its leaders placed high hopes in the opportunities this transfer would provide for accumulation of investment capital from individual enterprises cooperating with regional kurort administrations. But local administrators expressed their opposition to these plans almost immediately, and even while the Liberman reforms were getting under way, the kurort administrators spoke out firmly and consistently for the command-administration system as the solution to their problems of mounting consumer demand. When specialists advocated the creation of an “industry of rest,” they envisioned rearranging the organizational chart of the central planning system, not introducing market mechanisms like prices and credit. A Ministry of Rest, like the Ministry of Heavy Industry, would command its own food supply chain, taxi fleets, ships, gas stations, and railway cars instead of having to interact with other agencies for these services.<sup>68</sup>

In 1972, the head of the trade union kurort administration, I.I. Kozlov, pronounced confidently that with expansion plans now under way, the demand of Soviet citizens for their annual rest, whether in the central all-union kurorts or in republican or provincial kurorts, would be satisfied by 1990. But he also noted signs of growing new troubles that would only intensify in the coming years: much of the investment in new facilities never bore fruit because of the slow construction of new vacation complexes. In 1976 he noted that some projects had been under construction for eight or ten years and still were not finished; these half-built concrete hulks like the planned Svetlana pansion in Sochi, in its fifteenth year of construction in 1980, were now beginning to decay from exposure to the weather.<sup>69</sup> The column “Build Health Places More Quickly” became a staple feature of the newspaper *Trud* in the 1970s and 1980s. Who was to blame? The problem of so-called *dol-gostroiki*, or unfinished projects, was endemic in the Soviet economy; the vacation industry was not unique.<sup>70</sup> Trade union officials blamed local kurort councils that failed to hold their construction firms accountable or the architectural offices that failed to provide building plans in a timely manner. In their finger-pointing, officials ignored the larger context of an entire economy

67. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 104, 90, 248; d. 227, l. 111; d. 957, ll. 30–32; d. 2303, ll. 79, 175.

68. N. Shelomov, “Industriia otdykha,” *KP*, 27 September 1966. Shelomov, an architect, worked for the planning institute that commissioned the consumer survey. See also Azar, *Ekonomika*, 170–173.

69. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 1669, l. 199; d. 2303, l. 45; *Trud*, 23 February 1979; 24 January 1980.

70. Almost every report by the kurort head Kozlov included laments about construction delays: *Trud*, 27 April 1973; 27 December 1974; 14 April 1976; 13 April 1977; 22 February 1978; 29 December 1978; 23 February 1979; 10 April 1981; 2 February 1982; Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, 89.



running out of gas, relying on an obsolete system that was unable to allocate efficiently the resources at its command.

#### Unplanned, Unorganized, and Overwhelming

And still Soviet people wanted to spend their vacations in the sun and by the sea. The growing gap between this consumer demand and the trade unions' ability to accommodate it led to the explosion of "unorganized" vacationing. Even as organized facilities expanded, the number of unorganized vacationers came to be three and four times as large. In other countries such vacation travelers would be labeled "tourists," but in the Soviet Union the division persisted between "rest" and "tourism." Health resort areas had long served surplus vacationers through their system of ambulatory treatment: people who desired a course of treatment but did not have a putevka could travel on their own, find private lodgings through the local kurort bureau, and register with a polyclinic, which would assign the patient to a sanatorium dining room for meals and arrange a course of medical treatment, including mineral baths. In Sochi in 1954, the kurort bureau had arranged for almost three thousand beds for ambulatory patients but three times that number for vacationers expected to arrive without putevki or any plans to take a cure.<sup>71</sup>

The actual size of this vacationing sector defied exact estimation, precisely because it was unorganized. By 1960, Crimea kurort officials estimated that of 1.4 million vacationers that year, only 560,000 had come with putevki; Sochi in that year served 225,000 organized vacationers, but another 400,000 or more traveled without putevki, outside the system. By 1971, only one in five Sochi vacationers enjoyed the perquisites of a putevka. Economists considered passport registrations or the consumption of bread to assess the true volume of these so-called wild vacationers, and they used their estimates to justify the expansion by trade union organizations of pensions and kurort-cities to serve this burgeoning demand. One economist estimated in 1979 that nine of every ten vacationers in the south were unorganized.<sup>72</sup>

The massive flow of unorganized vacationers created havoc with attempts to plan the expansion of vacation facilities in an orderly way. The Black Sea town of Anapa, home to hundreds of thousands of Young Pioneers every summer, had expanded in the 1960s into a major destination for unorganized tourists.<sup>73</sup> These vacationers competed with "legitimate" vacationers for transportation (although an increasing number of them traveled in their own automobiles), they required housing and entertainment, and above all, they needed to be fed from the same sources of supply that served the organized visitors to sanatoria and rest homes. To regulate the housing demands

71. Azar, *Otdykh*, 13–20; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 460 (correspondence with *Krasnoe znamia* editors, 1953), ll. 30, 37; d. 498, l. 62.

72. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 23, 91–92; d. 1669, l. 110; Azar, *Otdykh*, *Ekonomika*; *Trud*, 10 April 1979.

73. Noack, "Coping." See also Avanesov, *Anapa*.

of this group, local kurort bureaus contracted in advance of each season with owners of private houses and apartments to lodge the overflow. They stipulated the rent that could be charged, how much extra would be charged for services, and the minimum living space per resident, and they established minimum sanitary norms. Only landlords whose accommodations met these requirements would be assigned vacationers through the local kurort bureau.<sup>74</sup> Bureaus also stipulated rules of moral behavior. In the 1982 film *Be My Husband*, a single mother and her child are denied a room in a private home in Crimea because she is unaccompanied by a husband. Meanwhile, a young male pediatrician sent officially for a cure in the south cannot find a hotel room. He agrees to act as her fictitious spouse so that she can rent her room while he sleeps on the veranda. (In the happy ending, of course, despite beaches packed with sunbathing bodies and other mishaps appropriate to romantic comedy, the two become a real couple.) Vacationers had no option but to accept the room they were offered. "There's nothing to haggle about, you're not buying a cow!" they were told.<sup>75</sup> As long as demand exceeded supply, there would be some vacationers willing to pay more for a room and landlords willing to rent for that price. In 1954, although the official contract had set the monthly rent at 170 rubles, some landlords were charging as much as 600. Landlords themselves would meet trains and make their own private arrangements with arriving vacationers: one study suggested that in Evpatoria, on the west coast of Crimea, only 81,000 of 480,000 unorganized vacationers had used the kurort's apartment bureau. Such private arrangements might be repeated for years if renter and tenant were satisfied with the conditions.<sup>76</sup>

Unplanned access to food presented greater difficulties. Only organized resters could take meals in the sanatorium dining rooms, and restaurants and cafés could not meet the demand of the unorganized. In Crimea during the peak season, one study estimated there were forty diners for every seat in a public catering establishment and one seat for every hundred diners in an actual sit-down restaurant. Kurort officials talked about expanding the array of catering options in order to accommodate the unorganized resters: more self-service cafeterias, snack bars, tearooms, buffets, and kiosks; more food shops, warehouses, and refrigerated storage facilities. Time-budget studies from the late 1960s showed that unorganized vacationers spent 25 percent of their day obtaining food, mostly standing in lines, whereas organized vacationers devoted only 15 percent of their time to meals, enjoying the dining

74. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 927 (newspaper clippings, 1959), l. 11 (article in *Adlerskaia pravda* from 15 April 1959).

75. *Bud'te moim muzhem*, dir. Alla Surikova, Mosfil'm, 1982; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 460, l. 31 (article in *Krasnoe znamia*, 18 August 1953) (quote).

76. GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498, l. 106; d. 712, l. 78; Azar, *Otdykh*, 19; Noack, "Coping," 295. A Sochi native recalls being sent as a teenager to recruit vacationers at the train station until her family tired of the inconvenience of taking summer lodgers. Personal communication, 8 April 2011.

experience itself. Finally acknowledging in 1976 the fact of this unplanned response to the huge demand for seaside vacations, Kozlov admonished the local administrations of Ukraine and Georgia, who preferred to devote their attention to their traditional, organized customer base, “The right to a healthful vacation belongs also to those Soviet people who have not managed to obtain a *putevka*. And they are in fact the majority. To provide for them a normal vacation—this is a task of the entire government, a task of Soviet trade unions.”<sup>77</sup> Attempts to redirect these wild vacationers to other parts of the country fell short: the south remained their dream. The new twelve- and fifteen-story pansion complexes in Adler and other expansion areas along the Black Sea coastline that were started but never finished had been designed to accommodate the unorganized.

### Whose Right to Rest?

As we have seen, the Soviet economy had been unable to fulfill the constitutional guarantee of a right to rest for everyone, and therefore access to spa and rest home vacations had been rationed through the *putevka* system. Highest priority went officially to medically needy workers, then to other medically needy citizens, and then to healthy workers. The symbolic entitlement of production workers continued well into the post-Stalin era: in 1961, the presidium of the Central Trade Union Council had affirmed that 75 percent of *putevki* should be allocated to production workers, and officials continued to monitor the social composition of the citizens who enjoyed the medical vacation facilities.<sup>78</sup> As the Soviet Union evolved in the postwar years from a producer to a consumer society, however, the consumption of vacations represented not only medical necessity but social distinction and status. Officials allocated vacations to enhance the status of favored groups—hence production workers officially merited superior respect and privileges. Consumers exercised their right to rest in particular ways that signaled to themselves and others their position in society. The practice of vacationing, then, became a factor in evaluating the development of Soviet society.

The low level of economic development in the Soviet Union exacerbated the problem of inequality in a socialist society. Stalin had famously reintroduced wage inequalities in 1931 to provide incentives for the growth of production; officially society consisted of social groups that varied in function and economic position but were “nonantagonistic.” The leadership that replaced Stalin in 1953 rejected the inequalities of the 1930s and pledged to restore the social and economic leveling of the earliest revolutionary Soviet years: as the economy developed, it would support a “state of the whole

77. Azar, *Ekonomika*, 99, 101, 22; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 215–220; d. 2303, l. 53 (quote).

78. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238, l. 168. See below for a discussion of the statistical efforts to record social composition.

people,” one that was socially homogenous and economically equal. The growth of the category of intellectual labor, one of the results of economic development, complicated this goal. In Stalin’s time, society consisted officially of two ruling classes—workers and peasants, plus an additional stratum—the intellectuals. The expansion of education and spread of technology in the 1950s, however, contributed to the growth and differentiation of an intelligentsia, or “information workers.” Their relationship to the state of the whole people required Soviet officials to develop policy that would recognize the importance of this new stratum without damaging the principle of social equality. This produced a tension in policymaking in many areas, including the provision of kurort and rest home vacations: by the 1970s, writes sociologist Murray Yanowitch, the regime faced a “need to appeal to the egalitarian sentiments of lower strata (via the constant reaffirmation of the vision of a ‘socially homogenous’ society) without threatening the material advantages—however limited these sometimes are—and social esteem associated with intelligentsia status.”<sup>79</sup>

In a series of important studies and surveys, Soviet sociologists explored the phenomenon of social stratification, and their work emphasized the role of nonmaterial advantages obtained by intellectual workers. The growth of a consumer economy provided opportunities for different strata to express their differential values in what they chose to consume. Economic capital combined with cultural capital in the making of these strategic choices, such as whether to purchase a refrigerator, an automobile, a cooperative apartment, or a seaside vacation.<sup>80</sup> Thus the right to rest became a contest about the right to choose, and the vacation became a site for the demonstration of socialist distinction.

In official discourse, the primacy of workers’ right to a vacation remained sacrosanct. In 1955 Eremenko insisted that given the excess demand for health resort places, preference should be given to workers “of leading professions and in leading branches of industry,” workers on state farms and machine-tractor stations, and invalids and veterans of war. He explicitly excluded intellectuals from this group. The primary responsibility of the health ministry was to increase the stream of workers and collective farm workers “not only to second-rank kurorts, but to the leading ones and above all to the Caucasus and Crimean resorts.” Second priority should go to those who were medically needy. Again in 1961, trade union kurort officials complained that workers were excluded from the best kurorts in the summer months. By 1963, however, official declarations began to include intellectuals among the deserving as long as they were medically entitled. Quoting Khrushchev, the kurort chief insisted,

79. Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality*, 18.

80. Ibid., citing studies by O.I. Shkaratan and Iu. V. Arutunian, 40–44; M. Kh. Titma, “On the Question of Social Differentiation in Developed Socialist Society,” in *The Social Structure of the USSR: Recent Soviet Studies*, ed. Murray Yanowitch (Armonk, NY, 1986), 65–80; O.I. Shkaratan, “Changes in the Social Profile of Urban Residents,” in Yanowitch, *Social Structure*, 104–119.

"Often healthy people are assigned places in our kurorts, we can call them 'permanent vacationers.' Our health resorts should receive only laboring people [*trudiashchimsia*]: workers, collective farmers, and intelligentsia." Once again in 1964, *Trud* insisted that kurort places should be reserved for leading "producers" (workers and engineering-technical personnel) and the medically needy.<sup>81</sup> Such wording, even while including intellectuals, excluded the less "leading" sectors of the economy, such as service workers and workers in the less prestigious industries, which included the consumer goods industry itself. Although the consumption of consumer goods and services might become a marker of status, their provision brought no special distinction.

The continual appeal for the priority of workers and the medically needy for subsidized vacations acknowledged the contrary reality that revealed itself in anecdotes and statistics. Those with the most social, political, and cultural capital—intellectuals and officials—vacationed every year and in the summer. Those with less—production workers—vacationed occasionally and mostly in the winter.<sup>82</sup> And those with least—collective farm workers—vacationed hardly at all. Moscow oblast rest homes reported for 1959 that workers comprised 56.5 percent of their visitors, well below official target figures, and that white-collar workers furnished 34.2 percent. Collective farmers might have been counted under the category "other," if at all, which amounted to 1 percent of the total. By 1968, collective farm vacationers received their own category in Moscow rest home reports, accounting for just 2.1 percent of vacationers. Workers provided 43.1 percent of Moscow's vacationers, white-collar employees 24.9 percent, and engineering-technical personnel 12.2 percent. To assess just how underrepresented were the former ruling classes of workers and peasants, we can cite their share of the total population. In 1970, according to official census categories, workers comprised 56.8 percent of the Soviet population and farm workers 20.5 percent. Collective farmers enjoyed the formal right to a vacation, but their limited cultural capital meant that they did not know they had these rights and would not know how to take advantage of them if they did.<sup>83</sup> Cinema reflected the oddity of the collective farm vacationer. Vasilii Shukshin's 1972 film, *Happy-Go-Lucky*, follows one such couple, only one of whom received a medical putevka, sympathetically recording their simplicity and lack of city guile. As late as 1984, the film *Love and Pigeons*, directed by Vladimir Men'shov, repeats the theme of the simple farm vacationer plunged into the exotic sophistication of a Black Sea resort.<sup>84</sup>

81. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 916, "of leading professions," l. 17, "not only to second-rank," l. 26; f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, l. 12; "Often healthy people," *Trud*, 4 May 1963, 2 July 1964.

82. The preponderance of workers in winter is noted for 1953 in the Sochi sanatorium of the coal industry. GAGS, f. 214, op. 1, d. 72, l. 17. In 1959, *Trud* reported that Perm workers received 60 percent of winter putevki and only 31 percent of summer putevki. 11 April 1959. In some Crimean sanatoria in summer 1961, workers accounted for between 2.8 and 24 percent. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 227, ll. 12, 67.

83. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1567, ll. 7, 10; d. 1603, l. 201; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo v 1973*, 43; GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 916, l. 17.

84. *Pechki-lavochki; Liubov' i golubi*, dir. Vladimir Men'shov, Mosfil'm, 1984.

Manipulating the medical putevka became another method by which intellectuals and white-collar workers dominated the right to rest. Despite rules that required potential putevka recipients to receive permission from the enterprise medical board, *Trud* in 1959 noted the well-known slogan, "If there is a putevka, a diagnosis can be found." The head of a specialized cardiac sanatorium outside Moscow echoed the problem in 1962: "Each place in our sanatorium is very valuable, and so many people wait in line for a putevka to a cardiac sanatorium. Yet at the same time these sanatoria are full of people who for the most part would be better off in a rest home or spending their vacation in the countryside." Few women arriving at a Moscow oblast rest home for pregnant women appeared to be pregnant, complained its director, and one of those who arrived with a putevka was a man!<sup>85</sup> Just as in the 1930s, the abuse of the putevka allocation system demonstrated just how highly valued a state vacation had become, both for the personal pleasure it provided and for the mark of distinction it gave to the recipient.

In the developing culture of leisure consumption, vacations in sanatoria had come to be the most highly prized and sought after: their level of comfort and food, leaving aside medical treatments and length of stay, far surpassed that in rest homes or available to outpatients living in private apartments or pansiones.<sup>86</sup> The state spent millions of rubles on medical treatment and personnel that were incidental to the vacation experience. For intellectuals and white-collar workers, vacationing in summer in one of the Black Sea kurorts signified their status. In his 1978 study of Soviet privilege, Mervyn Matthews reported that the thirteenth-month bonus for high officials was often called "hospital money," perhaps enabling the purchase of a putevka to a desirable resort. The most prestigious institutions controlled comfortable pansiones in the best holiday areas. The Union of Writers could reward its members with places in one of the seventeen creative houses it possessed. A 1963 report confirms that workers were underrepresented among sanatorium patients and those coming as outpatients; if they vacationed at all, they were more likely to take their vacation in a rest home. White-collar workers (a category that encompassed the intelligentsia as well as officialdom) were overrepresented among the sanatorium vacationers.<sup>87</sup> Table 5.2 shows the status of Black Sea vacation destinations in terms of the percentage of workers receiving

85. *Trud*, 11 April 1959; other mentions in *Trud*: 30 December 1958; 31 March 1965; 15 October 1965; 23 July 1966; 8 September 1966; 1 August 1967; 2 June 1971; 19 August 1971; 12 May 1974; 1 August 1980; "Each place in our sanatorium," GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, l. 314; TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, l. 42.

86. Malov (assistant chief of the State Economic Council of the Council of Ministers, speaking to 1962 kurort conference), GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, l. 381.

87. Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union: A Study of Elite Life-Styles under Communism* (London, 1978), 49; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 502 (statistical data on social composition and medical results, 1963), ll. 1–3. Data on 447,700 Moscow oblast vacationers in 1968 shows the same result: workers were least likely to vacation in places with medical treatment. TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1603, l. 201.



**Table 5.2** Production worker composition of vacationers in 1963, by selected kurort territory, in ascending order

Kurort region	Percentage of workers among all vacationers
All kurorts	45.3
Ten least proletarian	
Kislovodsk	26.3
Moldavia	31.5
Sochi	31.9
Georgia	32.9
Dagestan	35.0
Armenia	37.1
Kazakhstan	37.2
Piatigorsk	39.9
Lithuania	40.6
Sakhalin	41.7
Ten most proletarian	
Tatar republic	51.0
Saratov	51.1
Ivanovo	51.4
Kirgizia	52.5
Cheliabinsk	52.8
Krasnoiarsk	54.1
Leningrad	54.6
Perm	54.6
Arkhangel'sk	56.9
Novosibirsk	59.7

Source: GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 502, ll. 1–3.

putevki there. Whereas workers accounted for 45.3 percent of all vacationers, whether in sanatoria or rest homes, they were much less likely to end up in the favored spots of the Caucasus Mineral Waters (Piatigorsk and Kislovodsk) or Sochi. If status is measured by the smallest proportion of workers in residence, then Kislovodsk retained its status, first noted in the 1930s.

We should not assume that all social groups shared the same preferences. The development of a socialist consumer economy allowed for the diversification of tastes, whether in newspapers, commodities, or leisure activities. The uneven distribution of workers among destinations and types of

vacation institutions might reflect their own choices; a worker might prefer to vacation in a rest home rather than undergo the strict medical regimen of the sanatorium, but we lack evidence concerning such preferences. The market research surveys of the 1960s paid more attention to stratification by age and regional difference than by social stratum, at least in their published results. The poll conducted by the newspaper *Trud* revealed certain differences in preferred activities by social group: workers wanted to hunt, fish, and row while on vacation, activities not generally offered at sanatoria. White-collar workers, by contrast, would rather read, stroll, or play chess or skittles, all activities encouraged by sanatorium libraries and cozy clubs. Did workers and intellectuals prefer to vacation with others of their own social milieu? The evidence is not helpful here. A comment on a 1969 survey indicated that all social types engaged mainly in unorganized tourism: workers and intellectuals, married people and singles.<sup>88</sup> Again, this lack of preference reflects material reality as much as consumer preference, since unorganized vacationers numbered so many more than those with *putevki*.

### The Right to a Family Vacation

Soviet consumers expressed one vacation preference more unanimously and loudly than any other. The *putevka* system of distribution was geared almost exclusively toward adults vacationing alone, but throughout the Soviet period, and increasingly in the 1960s and 1970s, citizens wished to spend their vacations with their families. Kurort officials proved surprisingly resistant to accommodating these demands, both from their own beliefs that adults should vacation apart from their children and because accommodating families meant rethinking the entire structure of the trade union vacation system.

The medical and production origin of vacations contributed to the official indifference toward family vacations. Since the state was unable to provide healthful vacations for all its citizens, priority went to the most medically needy and the most deserving of this state benefit: production workers. "In the summer months when there is a critical shortage of vouchers, we have at our resorts too many nonworking family members and housewives. Health resorts ought to provide treatment and rest to the producers of our material wealth—workers and collective farm workers," argued the central directorate for trade union health facilities in 1955. The vacation served the good of the producer, not the producer's spouse or children. Moreover, children threatened to violate the peace and calm required for effective treatment, and they introduced further medical risk. A small number of health facilities had been established for mothers to rest with their children and for pregnant women, but in these cases too, the goal was to promote the health and well-being of

88. *Trud*, 21 June 1967; L. Pavlov, "Otdykh v 'razreze,'" *LG*, 3 December 1969, 11.

the women, not to satisfy their affective needs. With no way to care for their children, mothers whose health required medical vacations refused to take them unless they could bring their children along. Rest homes for mothers-to-be served as schools for motherhood, not for fun.<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, some adults actively sought the opportunity to escape from the drudgery and routine of their family circumstances. "It is a fiction that a mother wants to spend a month with her child," insisted the head of the Yalta spa district in 1965. "There is absolutely no basis in this." Children interfered with certain types of behaviors peculiar to the health spa environment: "a person on vacation does not behave as he does at work." Since the 1920s, as we saw in chapter 1, the health spa had been a symbol of the casual extramarital affair. Propaganda films reinforced the image of romance, with their lingering shots of young couples on verandas, overlooking vistas, and above all in the sunset.<sup>90</sup> Officially, the kurort regime tried to discourage romance, most famously by its 11:00 p.m. curfew; violating the curfew might result in expulsion from the kurort and a reprimand sent to one's place of work. And in a letter to the Sochi newspaper, a group of patients expressed their dismay at the prevailing culture of partnering: at their sanatorium, the "majority of patients were housewives, who sought out for themselves a convenient man," and the "men are looking above all for a woman." (In response, the sanatorium's director said he was not responsible for the behavior of his patients outside its grounds.)<sup>91</sup> By 1973, as shown in the film *Old Walls*, the resort affair had become a normal, if covert, part of the vacation, conveyed by a scene in which multiple women slip into their sanatorium rooms at dawn, evading the curfew after a night spent somewhere else. A short story by Vasilii Aksenov, "The Local Hooligan Abramashvili," recounts how the eighteen-year-old Georgian hero climbs to a second-story balcony to experience his sexual initiation with a vacationing older married Russian woman. In *Love and Pigeons*, a rural man unhappy in his marriage is swept away by an affair with a state official he meets while taking a cure.<sup>92</sup>

A long-standing Soviet taboo on discussing any sexual matters in public has made evidence of such resort affairs hard to come by. Commentators disagree on the reasons for the Soviet reluctance to discuss sex in public, suggesting ideological imperatives to deindividualize the person, peasant attitudes that treated the sex act as unclean, lack of knowledge, and the absence

89. GARF, f. 9228, op. 1, d. 916, ll. 26, 34; GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1955, l. 75; GARF, f. 5528, op. 4, d. 132 (conference on worker rest, May 1932), l. 88; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 498, l. 120 (letter to *Krasnoe znamia*, 16 May 1954); TsGAMO, f. 7223, op. 1, d. 1252, ll. 41–43.

90. Letter from A. Antonenkova, *Znamia trekhgorki*, 20 June 1964: "I was especially glad to rest away from all my domestic troubles"; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 698, ll. 109 (quote), 116; *Zdorov'e naroda*, silent film, 1940, RGAKFD, no. 4074; *My edem v Sochi*, color sound film, 1959, RGAKFD, no. 15475.

91. Leonid Likhodeev, "Moral'nyi oblik otdykhaiushchego," *LG*, 21 August 1968, 13; GAGS, f. 24, op. 1, d. 368 (correspondence with *Krasnoe znamia* editors, 1951), ll. 200–200ob.

92. *Starye steny*, dir. Viktor Tregubovich, Lenfil'm, 1973; Vasilii Aksenov, "Mestnyi khuligan Abramashvili," *Na polputi k lune* (Moscow, 1966), 43–61; *Liubov' i golubi*.

of privacy. "Sex is a deep and shameful secret not meant to be discussed," writes Elena Gorokhova about growing up in Leningrad in the 1960s; for her, despite an active sexual life, such relations were accompanied by a "deep sense of shame." As a result, Soviet young people received no sex education before the 1980s, reinforcing the association of sex with deviation and strangeness. But the practice of casual sex outside marriage was widely accepted. An émigré Soviet physician cited a survey that revealed 50 percent of married women who were satisfied with their wedded life found extramarital sex to be a normal practice.<sup>93</sup>

Drawing on testimonies about sexual practices by Soviet émigrés in the 1970s, the writer Mark Popovskii suggests that the entire purpose of the standard two-week rest home vacation for women was to "find themselves a man." Couples formed feverishly on the first day of the vacation; some liaisons lasted the entire two weeks, whereas other vacationers changed partners serially. Such vacations provided a chance, acknowledged Popovskii's informants, for single women to receive their "share of human happiness." The pioneering Soviet sexologist Igor Kon concludes,

All too common was what went on in the vacation homes and outdoor recreation centers: once out of sight of parents or spouses, many young people (and the not so young) caroused as if there were no tomorrow, fulfilling and overfulfilling the plan, making up for what was out of reach in everyday life. There was, of course, a joke about this as well: A foreign tourist returning home from a visit to the Soviet Union was asked whether the Soviets have any brothels. "Yes, they have," replied the tourist. "But for some reason they call them holiday homes."<sup>94</sup>

The vacation could also occasion more "legitimate" forms of romance, courtship leading to marriage. The ubiquitous dance evenings at health spas and tourist bases surely facilitated romantic introductions, but the matchmaking function of vacations was yet another topic left unexamined by the health spa officials who adhered to the official Soviet sexophobia.<sup>95</sup> The common expression "there is no sex in the Soviet Union" notwithstanding, the behavior that took place in Soviet health resorts and rest homes was not to be witnessed by children (or by spouses). What happened in Sochi stayed in Sochi.

93. Elena Gorokhova, *A Mountain of Crumbs* (New York, 2009), 226, 228; Mikhail Stern, with August Stern, *La Vie sexuelle en U.R.S.S.*, trans. Wladimir Berelowitch (Paris, 1979), 145; Anna Rotkirch, "'What Kind of Sex Can You Talk About?' Acquiring Sexual Knowledge in Three Soviet Generations," in *On Living through Soviet Russia*, ed. Daniel Bertaux, Paul Thompson, and Anna Rotkirch (London, 2004), 93–119.

94. Mark Popovskii, *Tretii lishnii: On, ona i sovetskii rezhim* (London, 1985), 138–139; Igor S. Kon, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia from the Age of the Czars to Today*, trans. James Riordan (New York, 1995), 83.

95. Donald J. Raleigh, trans. and ed., *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives* (Bloomington, IN, 2006), 169. On official sexophobia, see Kon, *Sexual Revolution*, chap. 5.

Soviet health facilities had always been constructed on the principle of sex and age segregation. In the 1950s most establishments, whether sanatoria or rest homes, lodged their guests in large rooms or tents holding six to twelve people; even a husband and wife had to lodge apart from each other. In more modern facilities in which two-person rooms could accommodate a mother and father, there was no room for children, and the beds were always single and narrow. The entire regime of the Soviet vacation establishment had been organized around the interests and needs of adults. Children needed their own level of cultural activities, different nutritional norms, and more supervision, insisted health officials. Other people's children impeded the normal rest of Soviet adults. Nude sunbathing could be allowed for adults but not in the presence of teenagers, and a Yalta resort director reported many complaints on this score. Children and young people were better off with their own age cohorts in pioneer camps and Komsomol outings, not mixing with adults who had their own particular needs.<sup>96</sup>

For some observers, the family vacation seemed ideologically inappropriate for a socialist society, in which the collective was more important than the family and in which bourgeois consumerism should give way to asceticism and work. The system of separate vacation facilities for adults and children in part reflected utopian dreams of the withering away of the family—which for some theorists meant a withering away of sex altogether—and the official restoration of Soviet family values in the 1930s did not necessarily promote the family as an affective unit. An official ideology that could not admit in public to the reality of sexual relations could find no justification for facilitating romantic getaways for lawfully married couples: the resort affair was one consequence of this ideological ambivalence toward the idea of healthy marital sex.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, conjugal units might threaten to undermine more socially important work-based collectives. Soviet rest home vacations in the 1950s and 1960s brought together individual adults in new collectives, reinforcing work-based identities, teaching habits of cooperation and solidarity, and developing friendships that transcended local or family loyalties.<sup>98</sup>

Finally, a Soviet family vacation (husbands and wives together, or parents with children) may have reflected bourgeois excess inappropriate for a socialist society. Most families could not afford to purchase vouchers for a vacation together, provoking envy and resentment toward those who could: to

96. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 428, ll. 111, 79; d. 698, ll. 108–109; GAGS, f. R-24, op. 1, d. 498, ll. 119–120 (16 May 1954 letter to *Krasnoe znamia*).

97. See Kon, *Sexual Revolution*, and Deborah A. Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia* (New York, 2007), chap. 4; Frances Lee Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses* (DeKalb, IL, 2007), 191. As Field has shown, private sexual life was open to state scrutiny and state policy, and even if people disagreed on moral norms, they tended to accept the state's right to intervene.

98. *Martenovka*, 11 May 1954; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 16 August 1960; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 151 (river cruise comment books, 1956), l. 62.

show up in Sochi with a child in tow risked incurring the wrath of local (and low-paid) medical people resentful of the “big ruble” that permitted such a luxury.<sup>99</sup> The proper socialist vacation would be rational and utilitarian, providing all members of the collective—young, old, married, or single—with the vacation conditions appropriate to their medical and production needs.

By the 1950s and 1960s, attitudes about family, love, and the emotional needs of Soviet citizens had begun to change. The increasing importance of consumption in defining the Soviet good life emboldened citizens to dissent from the institutional strictures on the family vacation. “Life has become better, life has become more fun,” said the trade union secretary Shevchenko in 1961 (appropriating the Stalinist slogan of the 1930s). “Laboring people have plenty of money and they can buy a voucher with their own savings.” The 1966 opinion poll conducted by Boris Grushin and reported in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* indicated that 45 percent of respondents wished to vacation with their families. The trade union newspaper poll in the same year, drawing on a different sample of the population (older, more proletarian), revealed that two-thirds of respondents preferred this kind of vacation.<sup>100</sup> Still, the Soviet regime responded reluctantly to this demand.

I argue that by the 1970s, the logistical and physical constraints of the vacation system itself, not ideology or attitudes, posed the biggest obstacle to a Soviet family vacation. Yet these constraints derived from the history of a medicalized and work-based approach to the public health needs of Soviet citizens. Vacation vouchers remained closely tied to one's work status. They were issued to individuals by their place of work, and it was very difficult for a married couple to arrange to receive two identical vouchers unless they worked at the same enterprise. At an international conference of health resort officials in 1961, Soviet officials sought guidance from their fraternal partners. One delegate asked the Mongolian representative how his agency managed to organize family vacations: “Let's say we have a husband who works in one enterprise, a wife in another, or not at all. How do you deal with this?” The Mongolian replied simply that the husband and wife could rearrange their vacation time: “We do this so that spouses won't need to pine for each other.”<sup>101</sup> In many cases, aspiring family vacationers with a single voucher arrived at their destination *en famille*, hoping to negotiate places on the spot. “We have an unpleasant picture, especially in summer,” reported a rest home director in 1955. “Papa or mama arrives with children and we won't take them. They raise a fuss, there are tears, pleading, they've spent money already for the trip, they say that the factory committee chairman said, ‘Just go,

99. GAGS, f. R-24, op. 1, d. 1044 (newspaper clippings, 1960), l. 46 (letter to *Krasnoe znamia*, 21 August 1960).

100. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238, l. 173; Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni*, 158; *Trud*, 21 June 1967.

101. GAGS, f. R-24, op. 1, d. 845 (newspaper clippings, 1958), l. 50; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 238, ll. 154–59.



they won't chase you away.' But the children cannot be accommodated."<sup>102</sup> Even if parents had purchased adult vouchers for their children, they would be refused a place because they were under age.<sup>103</sup>

By the 1960s, trade union officials acknowledged this growing demand for family vacations by expanding the number of facilities and by designating a greater proportion of vouchers for cash purchase. "Whether we like it or not, laboring people are coming here with their families," admitted resort officials in January 1962. Still, the parameters of expansion largely reflected the traditional pattern: the proposed plan for 1960–65 called for an overall expansion of the capacities of sanatoria, rest homes, and pensions, with more rest homes designated for youth, mothers and children, and pregnant women, categories that had existed since the 1930s. This year, however, special holiday homes for families also appeared on the list.<sup>104</sup> Over the next two decades, improvements in facilities and access for families made slow and only grudging progress.

"We need to take in children . . . life compels us to respond to the desires of the people," admitted a resort official in 1965, but in the same breath he insisted that children belonged in separate facilities. The Health Resort Administration pledged in 1972 to expand its places for families and parents and children to 54,000 in the next plan period, up from 28,000 at the end of the 1960s. At a time when the system offered 475,000 places in sanatoria and 320,000 in rest homes, this promised expansion scarcely met the needs of 45 or 66 percent of the population who wished to vacation with their families. And even now, the Health Resort Administration head warned that any further expansion of family vacations would require "huge preparatory work," the well-known code for foot-dragging. The planned construction of high-rise kurort-cities was designed above all to satisfy the demand for family vacations. Sochi began to build pensions for parents and children in 1968, constructing new sleeping buildings and offering child-friendly activities such as swimming and crafts lessons, music, hiking, games, and sports. Families dined together three times a day, but with special dishes prepared for the children. Specially trained medical personnel supervised the waterfront. Still in the planning stages in 1976 were a swimming pool, children's dining room, library, and children's amusement park.<sup>105</sup>

102. GARF, f. 9493, op. 3, d. 1955, l. 56. In informal conversations, almost everyone I have spoken to has a family story about a similar rejection; more rare is the heroic story of successfully finding a room. See also *Pechki-lavochki*, in which a tractor driver from Siberia sets out by bus and train to the Black Sea, determined to bring along his wife and children even though they have no vouchers. Screenplay in Vasilii M. Shukshin, *Kinopovesti* (Moscow, 1988), 226–89.

103. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 698, ll. 107–108, 117–118, 128–29, 142.

104. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 326, ll. 164–65; d. 4, l. 14 (20 July 1960 letter to Council of Ministers from trade union chief Grishin).

105. GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 698, l. 108; d. 1669, l. 30. Total sanatoria figures from *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1973*, 642; GARF, f. 9493, op. 8, d. 2303, ll. 106–109.

The ability of the Soviet vacation system to accommodate the demand for any kind of family vacation remained extremely limited even into the 1980s. In 1982, twenty-two years after the trade union head had called for more facilities for family vacationers, the kurort chief Kozlov announced a new approach. "Although this phenomenon has arisen recently," he insisted, "it has become very popular." His agency would begin to issue a single putevka for whole families, for rooms accommodating two, three, or four people, irrespective of where the two adults were employed. Families had already fueled the explosion of unorganized vacationing along the Black Sea coast. A survey cited in 1969 indicated that in Anapa, the most family-friendly destination, there were 103 children for every 100 adults; in nearby Tuapse, the ratio was 96 children for 100 adults; and even in Essentuki, in the more sedate Mineral Waters spa region, 3 out of every 4 vacationers were unorganized, and there were 43 children for every 100 unorganized adults. Moreover, the study revealed that these vacationers preferred to live in one- and two-story cottages or cabins, even in tents, rather than the high-rise pansiones in which the trade unions were investing so much of their capital.<sup>106</sup> The Soviet people had expressed their consumer choices, and officials made an effort to listen. But they continued to plan for expansion along the same limited parameters as in the 1930s, more beds each year, but distributed always in the same ways as before.

The socialist consumer regime that developed in the post-Stalin years moved sharply away from the hierarchical model of the 1930s, even if official policy continued to emphasize that vacation putevki should be allocated first to the deserving and then to the medically needy. Instead, with rising standards of living and more disposable income, increasing numbers of urban Soviet citizens had acquired the ability to exercise choice in how to consume leisure time, particularly the annual vacation to which they were entitled. As a journalist wrote in 1967 in the Writers' Union weekly, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, "'Surplus' money has emerged on the scene, and so too has the habit of going to a kurort, as earlier emerged the habit to acquire a motorcycle, a television, or a three-piece suit." Under the constraints of the shortage economy, Soviet consumers chose vacations that brought medical benefit through therapies ranging from sun and air to dental to psychiatric. They chose to vacation in summer, when they could most benefit from the full array of natural therapeutic factors, but also because summer time was the most "fashionable."<sup>107</sup> They chose to select their vacation destination themselves, as much as possible, preferring the crowded beaches of Anapa to the forested isolation of northern rivers and lakes. And they chose to consume this treasured restorative time with their close family members, building memories and taking direct management of the healthful and recreational opportunities that vacations

106. *Trud*, 2 February 1982; L. Pavlov, "Otdykh v 'razreze,'" *LG*, 3 December 1969, 11.

107. L. Zhukhovitskii, "Feshenebel'nost' stuchitsia v dver'," *LG*, 20 September 1967, 13.

could provide. The choices recapitulated many of the features of the prewar vacation experience, but the availability of discretionary income gave Soviet consumers new authority to make these choices, and the regime recognized its obligation to respond to their preferences.

Consuming a Soviet vacation retained its utilitarian significance. Whether medical or not, a vacation remained a repair shop for laboring people, restoring their psychological zest and their physical capabilities for work. Even the nonmedical elements of the vacation experience involved education, cultural uplift, and the rational use of free time. In the highest-priced sanatorium vacations, these qualities came bundled with the best food, the largest service staffs, and the most attractive physical landscapes. The preference of intellectuals and white-collar workers for medicalized vacations and their success in obtaining them invested these vacations with the sign value of privilege and prestige. An August vacation in a Yalta or Sochi sanatorium both provided medical and cultural utility and marked the consumer as someone whose status entitled him or her to this highest level of vacation leisure.

The language that described the Soviet vacation enterprise signified the post-Stalin socialist consumer regime to be democratic and mass. Officials promised year after year to expand capacity to meet demand, and they sought to accomplish this through Fordist measures of reducing unit costs, through scientific studies of demand, and through providing greater variety in vacation options. Even if the basic service component of a spa vacation—doctors, cooks, nurses, and cultural organizers—could not produce economies of scale, officials continued to promise new industrial methods of food supply (semiprepared foods, for example), and they employed standardized architectural designs to speed the process of constructing new facilities. One can observe a notable sameness in the architecture of pansions and hotels constructed in the 1970s, a Soviet brand analogous perhaps to the orange roofs of Howard Johnson motor lodges of the period.<sup>108</sup> But unlike consumer access in capitalist societies, which was guided by the invisible hand of the market, Soviet consumption was overtly and purposefully directed by professionals: physicians, architects, and sociologists. The Soviet vacation as it had evolved by the 1970s reflected an ambiguous balance of dependency on experts and freedom to exercise consumer choice, of utilitarian purpose for the good of the state and of pleasurable indulgence of physical, cultural and social appetites. Socialism would succeed economically by eliminating waste and irrationality in both production and consumption. The new Soviet consumer regime starting in the 1960s could flourish not only because of the expansion of the national income but also because of the triumph of the educational system that had finally produced a nation of expert planners and trained consumers.

108. Based on a review of photographs in *Turist*, 1966–1980, and *Trud*, 1965–1982.

In Western capitalist economies by the 1960s, the sedentary type of vacation, known in French as *villégiature*, had merged with travel for sightseeing under the single rubric of tourism. In the Soviet Union, these two kinds of leisure travel remained conceptually and administratively separate, and *rest* remained the gold standard, Sochi its mecca. Some people, particularly the most privileged, consumed both. Travel had become a badge of consumer distinction just as noticeable and important as blue jeans, transistor radios, and automobiles. The well-dressed vacationers in the film *From the Lives of Vacationers* came from the Soviet intellectual classes: a mathematician, a diplomat, an elderly woman of aristocratic mien who had known the 1920s poets Vladimir Mayakovsky and Sergei Esenin in her youth, and a guitar-playing professor. The ennui that surrounded this October vacation derived in part from its familiarity and regularity. “Last year I was in Sochi,” recalled the professor, “twenty-four days, but not one treatment, not one dose of medicine.” Two of the vacationers compared notes on their tourist trips to Italy, recalling the “Pentagon—oh, no, I meant ‘Pantheon,’” and listing the cities they had seen. As modern tourism after 1955 became more accessible and popular, the two forms of vacation would intersect and converge, as the next chapters will show, but the primacy and fashionableness of the spa vacation would never completely disappear: “Everyone must visit Sochi, if only once in their lives.”

## chapter six

# Post-proletarian Tourism

## The New Soviet Person Takes to the Road

When *Komsomol'skaia pravda* surveyed its readers in 1966 about what kind of vacation they preferred, the polling specialists were surprised to learn that 72 percent of the respondents favored an “Oneginesque” vacation, traveling from one place to another. One reader, a mechanic from Ul'ianovsk, wrote, “Of all the types of rest, I consider tourism to be the most valuable. Its merits are indisputable. You are completely free to choose your place of vacation and the method. Even ‘wild’ resort vacationers cannot boast of such advantages.” A Khar'kov engineer concurred: tourism provided the most valuable form of vacation.<sup>1</sup> In espousing the tourist movement's longtime slogan “Tourism is the best vacation,” the newspaper's readers also emphasized the need for more and better facilities, maps and guidebooks, and a new culture of vacationing that would allow them to travel intelligently and comfortably. Suddenly tourism, which had been the preserve of the physically active and perceived by others as a second-class form of vacationing, had acquired new status and respect.

The respondents specifically juxtaposed a vacation on the road to the sedentary sojourn in sanatoria and rest homes. All the goals of the annual vacation—to restore work abilities for the coming year, to improve health, to break away from customary routines, and to expand horizons and learn new things—could be better accomplished in travel than in sitting in one place. “When I am at a rest home or sanatorium, I feel—this is not what I really want. I want to be in as many places as possible, get to know new people, simply to wander about the earth,” wrote the cosmonaut Konstantin Feoktistov.<sup>2</sup> This chapter explores the rise and development of this new tourist sensibility, which became an essential component of the lifestyle of the Soviet intelligentsia and a marker of Soviet economic and cultural progress.

The attempt by Communist Party leaders to move beyond the Party's Stalinist past had generated a transformation in the country's economic goals and methods. As the preceding chapter has shown, consumption had become

1. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni Rossii*, 154, 165; the original questionnaire appeared in *KP*, 23 June 1966; *KP*, 8 July 1966.

2. *KP*, 23 November 1966.

acknowledged as a valid and legitimate aspiration of the Soviet person. The Twentieth Party Congress and, even more deliberately, the new program adopted at the twenty-second congress in 1961 confidently predicted a transformation in moral and cultural values. True communism, boasted the program, would be achieved in twenty years, by which time the country's abundance and prosperity would create the material basis for a new kind of Soviet personality. In the decade of the 1960s, wrote its chroniclers Petr Vail' and Aleksandr Genis, Soviet citizens looked forward with faith in a progressive future, and they could imagine achieving the communist utopia. "We were ready."<sup>3</sup> Tourism played a role in producing and defining this new personality. In the 1960s it finally shed its reputation as a poor cousin of the health spa and became an increasingly attractive form of active vacation, complementary to the kurort but offering new forms of mobility and new destinations to discover. Not coincidentally, tourism acquired its new status at the moment when people living in cities came to outnumber those living in the countryside and when educational levels had reached a new high. As befitting a society on the road to full communism, Soviet tourism would continue to serve the larger purpose of the state: the education of the new Soviet person. The proletarians of the 1920s and 1930s had produced children and grandchildren who would be the architects of this new order, a post-proletarian utopia built on knowledge and prosperity, expressed through leisure as well as work.

### Managing Tourism on the Road to Full Communism

However optimistic they were about the communist future, officials and participants of the Soviet tourist movement looked ahead to its expansion at the end of the 1950s with many questions unresolved, a legacy of the complicated and contested history of Soviet tourism. Was it a mass movement of enthusiasts in the tradition of the voluntary Society for Proletarian Tourism? Could trade unions, as "social" organizations, navigate a complex economy on which tourism depended for transportation, construction of tourist bases, equipment, and souvenirs? Would paid officials or volunteer instructors respond better to the growing demands for tourism services? Despite increasing appeals for the creation of a vacation industry, with direct control over its own empire of transport and construction services, Soviet tourism never found a stable institutional home within the larger universe of leisure travel.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between tourism and health vacations continued to pose problems of authority and financing. Tourist officials felt acutely inferior to the normative health resort activities of the Central Trade Union Council.

3. *Programma kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, 62–65, 119; Petr Vail' and Aleksandr Genis, *60-e: Mir sovetskogo cheloveka*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1998), 15.

4. See Azar, *Ekonomika and Otdykh*; *Turist*, no. 9 (1969): 2; V. Gens, "Dokhody turizma—pribyl' zdorov'iu," *Turist*, no. 6 (1970): 11; *Turist*, no. 10 (1976): 13; "O dal'neishim razvitiu i sovershenstvovaniu turistsko-ekskursionnogo dela v strane," *Turist*, no. 2 (1981): 1.



As separate departments of the council, the Tourism-Excursion Authority and the Kurort Administration targeted the same consumers but managed parallel structures, and the trade union administrative structure provided little common ground on which to cooperate in providing vacations for the Soviet people.

Two key events in the mid-1950s symbolized dramatic changes in the status of tourism. In 1955 the Soviet regime authorized foreign travel by Soviet citizens, beginning with visits to fraternal socialist countries but extending gradually to capitalist countries and those of the nonaligned world.<sup>5</sup> Second, the landmark Twentieth Party Congress in February 1956 aroused hopes for change across the spectrum of Soviet life. In April a TEU official insisted that the congress had instructed us to “keep in step with the times,” but the assembled tourism activists seemed more demoralized and divided than excited. Officials continued to disagree on whether the weight of their efforts should be directed toward promoting mass independent tourism or the expansion of planned tours by putevka. Chronic lack of funds meant that neither constituency was being served adequately, and the TEU did not even have the resources to bring its local representatives to a national conference; this led to accusations that they were operating too secretly, opening new tourist bases and itineraries with no consideration of local conditions or demand. Meanwhile, the officials expressed dismay at the more favorable treatment given to the Health Resort Administration: rest homes received direct subsidies for new construction, while the tourist authority had to finance its bases with the profits from the sale of putevki. As a result, tourist bases continued to lag badly in amenities and comfort.<sup>6</sup>

As we have seen, the Central Trade Union Council received full responsibility for administering health resorts beginning in the summer of 1960, producing an additional injection of funds and organizational energy to modernize stationary vacations. Tourism also faced scrutiny. The Trade Union Council handed its tourism officials another scathing broadside in November 1959, directing them to raise the level of leadership and improve the organization of domestic tourist facilities.<sup>7</sup> But oblast trade unions only gradually and grudgingly increased their efforts on behalf of tourists. When the central TEU finally called an all-union conference in September 1961, the representative from the newly formed Vladimir TEU told a familiar tale. They had no tourist bases or steamships of their own, none of the local trade unions or enterprises provided any subsidies, and they relied on selling putevki given to them by Moscow as their only tourist activity. Other representatives again pointed to their second-class status within the vacation sector. With all the attention being given to the trade union takeover of kurorts and rest homes, there was

5. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 10–11.

6. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 318 (tourist officials' conferences, 1956), ll. 11–14 (quote l. 11), 46, 35. The Central Trade Union Council issued two directives in 1957 and 1958 instructing the TEU to do more for the mass, independent tourist, such as producing more camping equipment and improving conditions in tourist bases. *Trud*, 10 March 1957; 19 August 1958.

7. The decree is mentioned in *Trud*, 16 December 1959, but the text was not published.

nothing left for tourism, said the delegate from Kuibyshev. The representative from Perm noted that the amount of money received from the oblast social insurance fund was only 10–12 percent of the sum given to rest homes. With inadequate funding, the tourist organizations found it impossible to provide attractive services, further depressing the demand for tourist vacations.<sup>8</sup>

Continuing disappointment with the provision of tourism services prompted a more radical reform in 1962, inspired perhaps by the adoption of the 1961 Party program, which placed a new emphasis on democracy and “communist self-management.”<sup>9</sup> Trade union authorities and Communist Party officials had decided that the TEU, the coordinator of Soviet tourism since 1936, had become too centralized, too administrative, too professional, and too cut off from organizations and agencies with their own interests in tourism. Incapable of expanding tourism opportunities, the TEU structure had failed to make tourism the mass movement of the activists’ dreams. A July 1962 decree of the Central Trade Union Council dissolved the central TEU and all oblast TEUs working under local councils. In their place, the central council created “councils on tourism,” with representatives of all the stakeholders: trade unions, the Komsomol, enterprises and economic organizations, sports societies, voluntary sports organizations, enterprise tourism cells, the volunteer organization to promote air defense, children’s excursion stations, and tourist clubs. The Ministry of Education, so closely engaged in the original Soviet tourism project Sovtur, did not receive representation in the new councils despite its role in local and museum excursions. Perhaps it stood too close to the state bureaucracy. Instead of paid bureaucrats, tourism decisions would be made by enthusiasts and volunteers represented in these new councils, and this would help to reinvigorate mass tourism and popularize the expansion of package tours. The big tent of the councils could accommodate all variants of Soviet tourism, from weekend outings to independent long-distance trips to package tours to the expansion of the tourist base and hotel infrastructure. In fact, if we judge by the example of Moscow, the reorganization may have changed the name of the tourist authority, but the leading actors remained the same, and the new representatives from public organizations exercised little influence in tourism affairs.<sup>10</sup> These councils, just like their TEU predecessors, were expected to be self-financing, operating with monetary contributions from the constituent partners and from revenues generated by tourist putevki. When it came to tourist vacations, the centralized state deferred to local initiative, enthusiasm, entrepreneurship, and funding.<sup>11</sup>

8. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381 (tourist officials’ conference, September 1961), ll. 15, 30, 62–69.

9. *Programma kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, 109.

10. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 2 (Moscow tourism council plenums, 1962), ll. 1–2, 27–35; see *Turist*, no. 9 (1969): 2, in which the education ministry’s role is strictly defined.

11. A. Kh. Abukov, *Turizm segodnia i zavtra: Turistsko-ekskursionnaia rabota profsoiuzov* (Moscow, 1978), 22.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1960s saw a consumer revolution in the USSR, despite the notable deficits in food supply that provoked massive disorders in the last years under Khrushchev. Consumer spending had begun to grow in the 1950s, according to foreign economic estimates, and overall consumption grew at a rate of 5.2 percent a year between 1964 and 1973.<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding the bureaucratic caution of tourism officials themselves, tourism shared in this consumer expansion, both foreign and domestic. As table 6.1 demonstrates, the number of tourists served by tourist bases and hotels grew tenfold during the 1960s in total capacity, and tourism's share of all vacationers more than tripled (excluding, of course, the untold numbers of unorganized tourists and vacationers). Scientific survey research began to devote serious attention to estimating the demand for tourism and vacations in order to make optimal use of funds for expansion. With the 1968 law that shortened the standard workweek to five days and extended the annual paid vacation from twelve to fifteen working days, the demand for both long-distance and weekend travel was expected to soar.<sup>13</sup> The Central Trade Union Council recognized these new opportunities in May 1969 with its most ambitious plan yet, endorsed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the USSR Council of Ministers. A joint decree called for massive new infusions of state funds for the expansion and improvement of tourist bases and hotels, it instructed union republics to allocate land for construction, and it commanded ministries of transportation and construction to cooperate with the councils of tourism to fully implement the law.<sup>14</sup> For the first time, tourism achieved the status of a full-fledged state activity, but as befitting the ambitions of a society on the path to communism, the new model for tourism featured shared partnership among state, party, and public organizations. This sometimes unwieldy coalition produced the most dramatic period in the growth of Soviet tourism. By 1975, vacationers under the auspices of the tourism councils represented more than half of all registered leisure travelers.

### The Best Tourism Is Independent Tourism

In the 1960s, independent touring became a “romance,” and the voices of the independent tourist dominated the tourism press in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly with the launch in 1966 of a dedicated magazine, *Turist*. The

12. Vladimir A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, trans. and ed. Elaine McClarnand MacKinnon (Armonk, NY, 2002); Samuel H. Baron, *Bloody Saturday in the Soviet Union: Novocherkassk, 1962* (Stanford, CA, 2001); Hanson, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy*, 65, 99, 114–115.

13. Azar, *Otdykh*, 6–8.

14. *Trud*, 26 June 1969, contains the text of the decree. Implementation of the decree received extensive and frank discussion at a plenum of the central council on tourism on 16 July 1969: GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d.1272 (central tourism council plenum, July 1969). *Turist*, no. 6 (1970): 11.

**Table 6.1** Growth in tourist base capacity, 1950–1980

Year	Population served in tourist bases	Population in all health, rest, and tourist bases	Vacationers in tourist bases (%)
1950	40,000	3,785,000	1.1
1960	562,000	6,744,000	8.3
1965	1,997,000	11,316,000	17.6
1970	5,041,000	16,838,000	29.9
1975	16,604,000	31,532,000	52.7
1980	22,503,000	40,040,000	56.2

Sources: *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1974* (Moscow, 1975), 616–617; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1975* (Moscow, 1976), 606–607; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR za 70 let. Iubileinyi statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow, 1987), 602.

press of these years frequently featured articles with titles like “The Romance of the Distant Road,” beckoning tourists to move freely around the country.<sup>15</sup> For intellectuals in particular, tourism meant precisely these journeys with rucksack, tent, map, and compass. The road provided all the answers to life’s contradictions, wrote Vail’ and Genis of the sixties generation. “Soviet tourism is not only rest and not only a way to understand the world around us,” the Moldavian doctor I. Kuliabko wrote to *Turist* in 1971, “it is also a test of our physical and spiritual strength, it is in some sense a means of self-affirmation [*samoutverzhdeniia*].”<sup>16</sup> The very term “romance” evoked a subjectivity that combined utopian dreams with physical mobility, not merely an escape from the grit of city life but a perfect existence: the job and the road together made one a whole person.

During the 1930s, as we have seen, tourism activists and advocates clashed over the proper definition of the proletarian tourist: if the goal of tourism was to expand horizons, learn about the great achievements of the country and its citizens, appreciate nature, and restore health and fitness, did this require the tourist to independently construct a journey and carry it out using only self-locomotion? Or could the basic goals of tourism be achieved with less rigor, with the assistance of planned group travel and in the soft seat of a motorized vehicle?<sup>17</sup> The development of Soviet tourism from the death of Stalin to the very end of the regime continued to reflect this fundamental debate.

15. These voices could also be heard in the mainstream press: *Trud*, 10 June 1959; 18 June 1960; 30 April 1964; 23 May 1965; 20 September 1966; 7 June 1967; 25 November 1969; 7 March 1972; 19 September 1972; 3 June 1973; 22 January 1974; 15 July 1975; 29 May 1976; 19 June 1977; 7 September 1979; 28 April 1981.

16. Vail’ and Genis, *60-e*, 128; *Turist*, no. 8 (1971): 13; another extended discussion in no. 12 (1973): 20.

17. These features of tourism were reiterated at a session of the Moscow tourism council in 1965. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, l. 1.

For many officials and hundreds of thousands of participants, the real tourist remained the independent, physical tourist. “Independent tourism is the most vigorous and important form of tourism,” asserted a Moscow official in 1962. One could truly appreciate the beauty and power of nature only by physically moving through it, not by merely viewing it from the porch of a tourist base or the window of a bus. Tourists who came for a twenty-day vacation at the base of the mighty Caucasus Mountains in Kislovodsk would never see those mountains unless they ventured out on the trail in overnight hiking trips. “Tourism is about travel, movement, not sitting in one place,” insisted another activist in 1965. There were too many tourist bases that served as alternatives to rest homes, with hiking or boating trips optional. “The percentage of real tourists there is plainly visible,” she added. These were sitting tourists, “mattress tourists,” but this was not tourism.<sup>18</sup> The independent tourist could be recognized by the rucksack he or she carried, the enduring symbol of proletarian tourism, and by the difficulties overcome. The real tourist faced rugged challenges and gained self-confidence in meeting them. Six young women from a Leningrad factory proved they were real tourists by marching all day in the rain with their rucksacks and guitars and then setting up camp in the pitch darkness. If someone lost all the group’s sugar while crossing a stream or forgot to bring the kasha for breakfast, these were only transitory setbacks remedied by the good cheer of collective song around the campfire.<sup>19</sup>

The closed nuclear city of Dubna, north of Moscow, with its physicists and engineers, had become a hotbed of romantic independent tourists, devoted to their campfires, guitars, and sailboats.<sup>20</sup> Independent tourism celebrated friendship as well as self-reliance. Engineer Nikolai Petrov averred to *Trud* in 1966, “Tourism is a way for people of different professions and interests to bond as a group. I could relate my adventures endlessly. Tourism as no other sport marries physical and moral qualities. You never meet a bad person among tourists.” An account of an independent tourist trip to Karelia by automobile marveled at the fierce thunderstorm that “reminded us of the third act of *King Lear*” but also described tourist society. “The smoke of campfires rose up to the sky, we heard the sounds of transistors and saw flotillas of folding kayaks. Nobody organized them, but they all followed the unwritten rules of life on the road.” The newcomers asked those already there for permission

18. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 352 (tourism officials’ conferences, 1957), l. 50; “Independent tourism is the most vigorous,” TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 2, l. 55; GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 170 (physical culture and sport central committee reports on tourist bases, August–September 1956), l. 42; “Tourism is about travel,” Aristova, in GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 750 (central tourism council plenum, May 1965), ll. 190–92.

19. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 14 May 1968; Vl. Arkhangel'skii, “Dva rasskaza,” in *Turistskie tropy. Al'manakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1959), 101–105.

20. N. Frolov (engineer), “Dubna—gorod romantikov,” *Turist*, no. 6 (1969): 10–11. On the connection between tourism, song, and the guitar, see Christian Noack, “Songs from the Wood, Love from the Fields: The Soviet Tourist Song Movement,” in *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, ed. Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker (Bloomington, IN, 2013), 167–92.

to pitch their tents and in exchange gave the “aboriginals” the latest newspapers, asked where the nearest spring was, how to catch fish, and whether the mushrooms were plentiful. In the evenings, tourists wandered from camp to camp, inquiring about the route ahead or demonstrating their equipment.<sup>21</sup> Here was a self-regulating society of equals, based on knowledge and mutual respect: the communist dream.

Independent tourists continued to be encouraged to form their groups based on prior friendship so that they would already begin their travels in an atmosphere of trust and mutuality. Tourist clubs at universities, enterprises, and institutes played an important role in proselytizing for independent tourism, and their notice boards helped to bring compatible individuals together.<sup>22</sup> However they were formed, it was important even for independent groups to register their journeys with local tourist clubs and with tourist bases on the road. Safety was a major concern. In registering, groups would have to demonstrate their qualifications and readiness for any given itinerary. In the hazardous practice of mountaineering, they were expected to keep to a schedule and report their movements so that appropriate rescue measures could be taken if necessary. Local tourist agencies also needed accurate counts of the numbers of independent tourist groups in order to plan their services and agitate for additional funding. One official estimated that only 10 percent of independent tourist groups formally registered their plans: authorities worried that as the tourist movement grew, it would spread beyond their supervisory and protective gaze.<sup>23</sup> The paradox of independent tourism remained: tourism would teach mutuality and self-reliance, but who would ensure and enforce the requirement that groups possessed enough skill to be self-reliant? A spate of climbing accidents in the 1960s prompted eight veteran tourists to remind the new generation of the importance of rules: “Forty and fifty years ago, we were the youngsters.” They had made mistakes and learned from them to create a code of rules. Beware of overconfidence, they warned. “He who violates the rules that have been worked out by the tourist public [*obshchestvennost’iu*] itself is not a tourist but an antitourist.”<sup>24</sup>

Physical tourism provided better health and gave tourists unmediated encounters with nature in all its power. Independent tourism by small groups with minimal equipment was also accessible to the widest number of people

21. *Trud*, 20 September 1966; Lena and Sergei L’vov, “Piatero v mashine, ne schitaia ‘Spidoly.’” *LG*, 12 September 1964, 2.

22. *Sputnik turista* (Moscow, 1959), 15–17; *Trud*, 6 June 1957; 22 November 1958; 18 June 1960; 22 January 1974.

23. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, ll. 5, 110; see Maurer, “*Al’pinizm* as Mass Sport,” 149; GARF, f. 7576, op. 14, d. 123 (report on qualifying marshrut, October 1955), l. 37.

24. “Zakony, sviashchennye dlia vsekh nas,” open letter from O. Arkhangel’skaia, A. Vlasov, B. Delone, A. Gusev, A. Maleinov, E. Simonov, M. Shmelev, and A. Iarov, *Turist*, no. 1 (1972): 11. The rules were laid out in the handbook *Sputnik turista*, successor to similar volumes published in the 1930s and 1940s. Accidents were discussed in private in GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 750, l. 25; d. 921, l. 20, and in the press: *Turist*, no. 4 (1972): 22.



because it required no expensive infrastructure of hotels, cafés, and transportation networks. Yet even purists disagreed on the best form of organization. Just as in the 1930s, a sizable contingent of activists insisted that tourism was more than an alternate form of vacation; rather, it was a type of sport, a “sport of millions.”<sup>25</sup> Thus it required training, rules, and discipline, and its success should be measured by competitions and awards. The Tourist USSR badge and the Master of Sport classifications provided concrete goals that measured tourism prowess. To become a Tourist of the USSR, a person had to complete a qualifying itinerary, which must include at least 180 kilometers of hiking or rowing. Tourists on these trips mustered morning and evening in lineups that fostered military-style discipline; they heard lectures on sports, tourism, and physical fitness; and they had to pass an oral examination on the techniques of tourism, such as lighting a fire in the rain, mountaineering safety measures, and modes of crossing rivers. Sporting tourism activists had complained continually since 1953 about the relaxation of these norms, and they rejoiced when the rank of Master of Sport in Tourism was restored in 1966.<sup>26</sup>

Active sporting tourists looked to annual rallies, *slety*, as an opportunity to test their tourist skills in competition with other enthusiasts. During these Sunday and holiday events, held throughout the summer months, teams would navigate a series of obstacles, crossing swamps, lakes, and rivers and passing through checkpoints along the way. Teams earned points for speed and also for separate competitions in tourist activities such as tent pitching, meal preparation, relay races carrying fully loaded rucksacks, and volleyball, the classic vacation pastime. During the white nights of June, the competitions would last until dawn, culminating in huge campfires at 2:00 a.m. Some of the Moscow rallies attracted as many as ten thousand participants in the 1950s.<sup>27</sup>

As part of the amateur sports network, tourist rallies fell under the supervision of enterprise or district voluntary sports societies, within which tourists had to compete for attention and funds with more popular sports such as soccer and hockey. Local tourist clubs increasingly took on the function of organizing rallies and, more important, training the instructors who would teach novice tourists the skills they needed to succeed in rallies and eventually on the tourist trail. “Tourism is above all a sport,” insisted a Moscow club official, and it was essential that its participants be trained to participate “boldly and powerfully.”<sup>28</sup>

25. *Trud*, 27 March 1961.

26. GARF, f. 7576, op. 14, d. 123, ll. 6–40; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, l. 96; *Trud*, 27 January 1966; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 578 (tourism officials’ conference, April 1963), l. 94, advocating the restoration of “Honored Master of Tourism” in 1963.

27. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 13 June 1958; 19 June 1974; *Martenovka*, 29 July 1954; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, ll. 23, 51, 80; *Trud*, 20 September 1966; Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma*, 137–140.

28. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, ll. 111–113.

The best tourism was also “mass tourism,” not the mass excursions of the 1930s with brass bands and hortatory speeches but the massive participation of individuals, traveling in their small groups on Sundays and weekends as well as during summer vacations. The real growth in the numbers of tourists reported by the central authorities came through the popularization of weekend outings, part of the mass tourism mission that had originated in the 1920s. In 1964, whereas 2.2 million tourists embarked on multiday independent tourist trips, official statistics reported that 15.1 million took their rucksacks on one-day outings. By 1967 the number of independent day trippers had increased to 27.6 million, compared with 3.4 million on extended trips.<sup>29</sup> These travelers left their dusty cities each Saturday and Sunday on the so-called health trains, carrying tents, rucksacks, guitars, and—to the dismay of activists—often bottles of alcohol. They camped anywhere and everywhere, many unsupervised and uncounted. The most organized joined tourist sections in their enterprises and participated in the official rallies that celebrated tourism skills.<sup>30</sup> The least organized caused increasing consternation as their tourist outings often degenerated into weekend drinking bouts and sites for all kinds of “amorality.” The wholesale destruction of exurban woodlands that tourists wantonly utilized for their tent poles and romantic campfires caused particular concern.<sup>31</sup>

Weekend outings and hikes had come to be associated with the lifestyle of the Soviet urban intellectual, as depicted in films such as *July Rain* (1967) and *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980), in which groups of close friends traveled to their favorite spots in nature, built campfires, grilled shashlik over the coals, sang songs, and talked about life. They included groups like the one I traveled with in 1973; on winter weekends, these scientists, editors, and artists journeyed by train to the station Turist north of Moscow, where they spent two days skiing, cooking, swapping partners, drinking laboratory-distilled vodka, and playing charades or Monopoly. Fortunately for me, nobody kept track of them, since as a foreigner I was not permitted to travel that far beyond the city limits. The weekend trains were packed with tourists like these.

This kind of tourism produced no profit for the trade union tourist councils, and activists continually complained that central authorities ignored the

29. GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 176 (materials on tourist bases and camps, June–September 1958), ll. 54–58; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1297 (statistical data on tourism, 1961–69), l. 1.

30. One of these was the eminent mathematician and alpinist Boris Delone, whose letter to *Turist*, no. 4 (1974): 1, boasted that at age eighty-four, he had spent every Sunday for the past thirty years hiking out of town. On rallies, *Trud*, 19 September 1978; 24 May 1981; *Martnovka*, 2 June 1960; *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 13 June 1958; 15 July 1960; 22 May 1968; 19 June 1968; 19 June 1970; 19 June 1974; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 24 August 1960; 9 June 1976.

31. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 578, ll. 136, 138; d. 921 (central tourism council plenum, March 1966), l. 19; *Trud*, 14 September 1975.



Summertime resters on the beach at Serebrianyi bor, Moscow, 1954. Photograph by N. Rakhmanov. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk. Used with permission of the archive.

interests of weekend and independent tourists. The shortage of good-quality, lightweight tents and rucksacks remained a perpetual grievance.<sup>32</sup> Tourism officials, for their part, hoped that the expanding network of tourist clubs would restore the old spirit of voluntarism to Soviet tourism and allow them to concentrate on the provision of profit-making services. By 1960, seventy clubs had been created across the country. These served above all as sources of information: experienced tourists provided consultations, assisted by files of trip diaries submitted by prior groups. Clubs explored and certified new local itineraries, and they acted as the gatekeepers for tourist groups, making sure they were prepared for their proposed journeys. They also kept a reserve of tourist equipment that groups of members could rent for their weekend outings or longer trips.<sup>33</sup>

32. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1272, l. 243; d. 632 (central tourism council plenum, December 1964), l. 22; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 2, ll. 65–66.

33. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 101 (Moscow TEU report, 1953), ll. 85–86; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 117 (Moscow TEU report, 1954), ll. 118–125; T. Pakhomova, “Moskovskii Gorodskoi Klub Turistov,” *Turistskie tropy. Al'manakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1958), 198–202.

### Package Tours: Second-Best but Profitable

In 1983, *Turist* conducted a survey of its readers' tourism experiences. Of this self-selected group of respondents, 19 percent engaged in independent tourism along complex routes, including the more extreme forms of sporting tourism. Another 20 to 30 percent participated in independent tourism that combined "a good vacation" with some physical effort but in which learning about the surrounding world was more important than sport. The remainder, between 60 and 70 percent, purchased a putevka for a planned tourist route aided by instructors and group leaders.<sup>34</sup> The tourist collective brought strangers together to become friends and conquer obstacles: here was socialist collectivism in action.

Collective mutuality could come in many forms, and tourism encouraged all of them. Individuals might arrive at a tourist base alone, and through the encouragement of lectures and in practice, they would come to trust one another and to work together. "The most important thing we got from the base," wrote a tourist in her diary from a Crimean hiking trip, "was that twenty people came here, strangers, and they left as a collective ready for all difficulties that the coming trip might have in store." The standard tourist base routine provided many opportunities for these strangers to meet one another, to work together on short tasks and training hikes, and then to choose among themselves the smaller groups that would carry out their long-distance treks or boat trips. "People come together for a weekend outing, not knowing one another," wrote another *Trud* contributor. "and then suddenly in two days they have become friends, sharing in equal measure joy and hardship."<sup>35</sup>

The very regime of the tourist experience was organized to promote the socializing values of the collective. Upon arrival at the base, the instructors introduced the tourists to the camp facilities and options available for trips; by the second day they were already forming their smaller groups and training to carry out their long marches. While at the base camp, they practiced techniques, but they could also engage in swimming, sunbathing, and sports. Evenings, just as at rest homes and sanatoria, featured movies, amateur concerts, and dances. Tourists were also expected to devote a few hours a week to housekeeping around the camp or to help local villagers with their agricultural work. On the march they divided up their duties, but the group was organized horizontally: "On a trip, everyone is a boss, there are no ordinary tourists: one person is the group organizer, another the cultural organizer,

34. *Turist*, no. 4 (1983): 20–21. (Participants in planned tours complained the magazine focused only on the first two kinds of tourists; the sporting tourists alleged the opposite.)

35. "The most important thing," GARF, f. 7576, op. 30, d. 170, l. 3; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6 (tourist base reports, 1959), l. 154; "People come together," *Trud*, 20 September 1966.



Tourists setting out on an overnight trip from the Enisei tourist base, Krasnoirsksk region in Siberia. *Turist*, no. 8 (1968): 11.

and so forth. We have as many chiefs as we have tourists.”<sup>36</sup> The Soviet tourist base routine is very reminiscent of the kind of Girl Scout resident camp I experienced as a camper and counselor in the 1960s, where socialization was the main goal and skill was secondary.<sup>37</sup>

Some trips emphasized the rigor of physical effort, but many more catered to the less adventurous tourist, such as itinerary 79 over the Kakhketin range of the Caucasus Mountains, which offered exposure to “the most varied regions of the Caucasus.” Starting in the city of Ordzhonikidze, tourists rode by truck to the southern stretch of the Georgian Military Highway, then climbed on foot to a Georgian village, where they camped at a local school. After taking breakfast in a shepherd’s hut, they continued their journey with a combination of truck travel and trekking: long hikes to obtain the most spectacular views of the mountains and motorized transport to visit museums, ancient

36. GARF, f. 9559, op. 1, d. 860 (health camp officials’ seminar, April 1966), ll. 47–50, 95 (quote); TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 44–45, 47; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 361 (reports on tourist base services, 1958), ll. 11–12.

37. Other types of American youth camps emphasized competitions. Hear “Notes on Camp,” *This American Life*, especially note 6, “Color Days,” 28 August 1998, <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/109/notes-on-camp>. See also Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890–1960* (Minneapolis, 2006).

churches, and fortresses. Spending one night in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, the group then traveled by train to the seaside tourist base at Zelenyi Mys, where they enjoyed four days on the beach and received their Tourist USSR badges.<sup>38</sup>

Evenings around the campfire memorably cemented group cohesion. The campfire, with its mysterious heat and light, its protection against the dark, its link with the primitive, had a universal appeal, and organizations everywhere have built elaborate rituals around them, including the U.S. National Park Service and the scouting movement.<sup>39</sup> For some, the evening campfire, with its guitars, songs, skits, and the romance of the firelight, symbolized the essence of tourism. Vail' and Genis recall that even the individualist poet Joseph Brodsky had succumbed to the lure of the campfire and commemorated it in verse. Reluctant tourists became captivated by the campfire ritual even after just a day hike and vowed to join a group for more long-distance adventures.<sup>40</sup> Her most memorable tourist moment, recalled a veteran independent tourist in 1966, "was a trip on foot and by boat through the impassable rivers of Karelia, the weight of my rucksack, portaging our boat from stream to stream, and then the campfire and song, song, song." Traveling abroad, Soviet tourists remembered their shared campfire with local Czechoslovaks as one of the highlights of their package tour.<sup>41</sup>

Since the 1930s, the financial base of Soviet tourism, however mass, had rested on the sales of putevki for planned, packaged tours. Unlike the more favored health spas and rest homes, tourist trips were rarely subsidized through trade union social insurance funds, and tourists generally had to pay the full cost of their journeys themselves. Central and local tourism administrations (and after 1962, councils) depended on this revenue to pay salaries, to promote independent tourism, and to expand the very infrastructure of tourism, which operated in the 1950s and 1960s on a strict cost-accounting system. In 1965 the head of the trade union tourism authority, Aleksei Khurshudovich Abukov, reported that 80 percent of the operating budget of the central tourism council came from the sales of putevki.<sup>42</sup> Naturally, then,

38. The tour is described in *Turistskie marshruty po SSSR*, ed. O. A. Arkhangel'skaia (Moscow, 1958), 224–231, and was evaluated in 1958 by a TEU representative, GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 361, ll. 16–20.

39. Van Slyck, *Manufactured Wilderness*, 183–188; evening programs that I attended at national parks invariably invoked the "founding campfire," at which explorers of the Yellowstone region asserted that such beauty should belong to the whole American people.

40. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 14 June 1966; 25 June 1970 ("Burn, Campfire!"); *Mar-tenovka*, 9 July 1960; Vail' and Genis, 60-e, 128; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6, l. 39.

41. *Trud*, 20 September 1966 (quote); GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 865 (foreign travel group leader reports, 1965), l. 37. (Hungarians had their own campfire traditions, with song, of course, and roasting onions and fatback on sticks. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1115 [foreign travel group leaders reports, 1967], l. 39.)

42. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 167 (reports on the status of tourist bases, 1950), l. 7 (on history in 1930s); GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 631 (central tourism council plenum, April 1964), ll. 11, 27; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 750, l. 63.



the greater the number of itineraries that tourism councils could offer, the more revenue they could generate, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s, both the central and local tourism agencies worked to develop new routes, new destinations, and eventually new modes of tourism, as we shall see below.

Other than the well-known tours in the Caucasus and Crimea, many of the new itineraries in the 1950s were constructed almost by accident: an unused monastery could be adapted as a tourist base, and a trip could be developed around it, with little thought about whether such a trip would be interesting or attractive for tourists. Gradually, the development of new routes became more systematized: tourist officials provided an itinerary passport to central commissions, which specified the type of trip (walking, bicycle, automobile), starting and end points, the length, the category of difficulty, sights to visit along the way, and recommended spots for overnight camps.<sup>43</sup> In 1958 the annual guide to tourist itineraries listed 122 package tours offered by the central TEU. They ranged in duration from five to twenty days and in price from 280 rubles for a ten-day stay at the Borodino tourist base near Moscow to 1,700 rubles for a twenty-day cruise from Moscow to Astrakhan and back in a “deluxe” cabin.<sup>44</sup> (The average monthly wage in 1954 was about 700 rubles.) By 1968, tourists could choose from among 192 national (all-union) itineraries and 721 locally sponsored tours. Ten days in Borodino now cost 28 rubles (after the devaluation of 1961, the average wage was around 113 rubles), and twenty days on the Volga in a first-class cabin carried a price tag of 165 rubles.<sup>45</sup>

The impressive variety represented in the itinerary guides did not correspond to tourist demand. “It’s no secret that people buy a tourist putevka for full price only for the Black Sea coast or for Leningrad,” asserted E. K. Shishkin, the chairman of the Bashkir tourism council in 1964. “But to our regret, they don’t willingly pay full price for putevki on local itineraries.”<sup>46</sup> Moreover, although many trips could be taken at any time of the year, and some were specially designated cross-country skiing itineraries, demand for tourism putevki, like that for vouchers to health spas, was seasonal.

As with kurort vacations, the method of distribution further complicated the mismatch between supply and demand. At the beginning of each tourist year, local TEUs (and later councils) could order a given assortment of putevki, both national and local. Trade union organizations could then buy these from their TEU for resale to their members or to give as prizes for exemplary work performance. The allocation of tourist travel, then, resided squarely

43. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 318, ll. 11, 16, 20; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 208–234ob.

44. *Turistskie marshruty po SSSR* (1958). This edition, edited by the venerable tourism activist Arkhangel'skaia, featured lengthy descriptions and photographs of some of the most popular routes; fifty thousand copies were printed.

45. *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*, comp. P. Rakhmanov (Moscow, 1968), published in an edition of fifty thousand. (The 1967 edition came out with seventy-five thousand copies.) Wage data from Chapman, *Real Wages in Soviet Russia*, 109, and *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1973*, 586.

46. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 632, l. 85. See also d. 632, l. 56; d. 381, ll. 32, 118; d. 631, l. 151.

in the workplace. A prospective tourist could not simply write to the Sochi tourist base, for example, to join radial tour number 32, twenty days in Sochi: all these putevki would long before have been swept up by local councils and trade unions. Still, given the low demand for most of the other itineraries, plenty of putevki remained unclaimed. The Moscow tourism council reported in 1965 that trade unions had purchased only 60 percent of the putevki they had available, and the council needed to sell the remainder directly to tourists in order to make ends meet. Unsold putevki meant that local councils would operate at a loss.<sup>47</sup>

Tourism officials complained about the unwillingness of the social insurance system to subsidize tourist putevki at the 70 percent rate applied to health resorts and rest homes. The only alternative was marketing. In April 1957, the central TEU took out an advertisement in *Trud*. "A tourist trip around the homeland is accessible to everyone," it pointed out, listing available itineraries and the addresses of local TEUs where putevki could be purchased. A 1957 poster by V. Govorkov hailed the allure of "taking the whole family on vacation" by train (even though such family opportunities were rare). The annual guides to itineraries, published in editions of fifty thousand and more, also helped to publicize tourism opportunities. Officials encouraged "tourist evenings," in which past participants could talk about their trips and entice others to join. The spreading network of tourist clubs could also assist in this kind of publicity, and they sponsored evenings of slide shows and home movies about tourist vacations. Tourist destinations could also be publicized using radio, television, newspapers, and brochures.<sup>48</sup>

The number of tourists unquestionably expanded in these years, although precise figures are difficult to calculate. In 1964, roughly 610,000 putevki were sold for package trips, while another 2.2 million tourists traveled independently, some using the services of tourist bases, others camping. The TEU reported that it sent 50,000 tourists abroad in 1963 (a figure lower than other estimates of foreign travel.) By 1974, categories of tourists had collapsed: the secretary of the Central Trade Union Council reported that in 1969 there had been 7.2 million tourists; by 1974 the number had grown to 20 million, plus another 50 million weekend tourists and 300,000 traveling abroad.<sup>49</sup>

Part of the difficulty in accounting for tourists arose because of the decentralization of tourism work and the growing initiative of local councils, something that the reforms of 1962 and 1969 had been intended to encourage.

47. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, l. 17; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 632, l. 12; d. 2077 (central tourism council meeting, April 1975), l. 191.

48. *Trud*, 3 April 1957, 6 June 1957; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 525 (central tourism council plenum, April 1963), l. 60; d. 632, ll. 30, 82–83; Lebina and Chistikov, *Obyvatel' i reformy*, 285.

49. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1297, l. 72; d. 631, l. 16; d. 1910 (tourism officials' conference, December 1974), l. 25. Another source reported 1.85 million foreign tourists in 1970. Azar, *Otdykh*, 41.

In addition to creating their own local itineraries, oblast tourism agencies also sponsored their own long-distance trips. The Moscow TEU led the way, with its launch in 1960 of special tourist train journeys to the Caucasus and the Black Sea. By the mid-1960s, many other local councils sponsored their own tourist trains, and they began to enter the river cruise market in a big way as well. By 1967 a tourist could obtain from any of ten oblast councils a putevka for a twenty-day Volga cruise from Moscow to Astrakhan and back. The Sochi tourism council began to offer its own Black Sea cruises from 1964; by 1969 it operated its own international cruises, sailing from Sochi to Romania and Bulgaria. It sold putevki to tourists not only from the local Krasnodar region but from all over the Soviet Union.<sup>50</sup> It was no accident that Moscow and Sochi were able to pioneer these local initiatives, for they had accumulated surplus resources as two of the most desirable destinations on the tourist map.

Local initiative also led to local conflicts as each vendor of tourism itineraries competed directly or indirectly with the others. The director of the Sochi tourist base refused to provide any services for tourists on Moscow's 1960 train. The small and underfunded Vladimir tourism council tried in vain to engage Moscow in a joint tourist venture to promote its ancient towns, which were becoming especially popular among the Moscow intelligentsia at the start of the 1960s. Siberian tourism councils resented the efforts of Moscow-based officials to create their own routes on Siberian territory. The larger councils, alleged critics, were also in a position to negotiate better rates when renting trains and steamships from the various transport ministries.<sup>51</sup> Fares for the ten different Moscow-Astrakhan cruises in 1967 varied from 160 to 170 rubles in first class and from 86 rubles to 100 in fourth class, but the most expensive first-class ticket, at 170 rubles, was in fact sold by Moscow, a subtle sign of market-based pricing. Moscow generated the largest demand for tourist travel, and its tourists could afford to pay a premium for their journeys.<sup>52</sup>

### Trains and Boats and Planes: Expanding the Geography of Tourism

The expansion of recreational and leisure mobility might well be considered one of the signal achievements of the post-Stalin Soviet state. Both health vacations and tourism brought positive benefits to their consumers in addition to providing pleasurable respites from the everyday world of work.

50. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 9 (report on itinerary 187, 1960); *Turistskie marshruty na 1967 god*, comp. P. Rakhmanov (Moscow, 1967); GAGS, f. 261, op. 1, d. 3 (Sochi excursion base report, 1964), ll. 1–2; d. 89 (comment books for sailings, 1969–70).

51. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 9, l. 3; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, l. 75; d. 750, l. 48; d. 632, ll. 177–180; d. 1272, l. 112.

52. *Turistskie marshruty na 1967 god*.

During the 1960s, the expansion of tourism opportunities took many forms: new hotels and tourist bases, new routes, and the promotion of mass weekend getaways. The desire of Soviet vacationers to explore new frontiers had expanded significantly since the immediate postwar years, when the great majority of tourist itineraries merely mimicked the stationary resort vacations. The lure of the south with its sun and sea air remained powerful even in the 1960s and beyond, but tourism also expanded through new destinations and modes of travel, all for the purpose of making a tourist vacation accessible to the growing share of the population that enthusiastically sought these opportunities. Yet just as it failed to fulfill many other promises about the communist good life, the Soviet economy was unable to provide vacation facilities to meet the demand of an increasingly urbanized society, educated wage earners with the financial resources to make choices about how they spent their leisure time.

### Urban Destinations

Although most tourists yearned to travel someday to the Black Sea or the Caucasus, Moscow was still itinerary number 1, as it had been since the 1930s.<sup>53</sup> As the capital city of the Soviet Union, it held great appeal. For tourists, writes Jean-Didier Urbain, “the city concentrates the values of a civilization,” and tourist officials shared this judgment. “All roads lead to Moscow,” wrote the 1959 tourist handbook. “No matter where you have traveled, if you are not a native Muscovite, you will always dream of being in Moscow, on Red Square, in the Kremlin, to walk along its streets, to encounter its grandiose and manifold riches. . . . For the tourist Moscow is indisputably the most valuable source of knowledge.”<sup>54</sup> Moscow’s tourist services also exemplified urban tourism in the USSR: accommodations continued to leave much to be desired, lodging tourists in makeshift hostels far from the center. But Moscow offered a world of sightseeing possibilities with its socialist, patriotic, and cultural attractions. In 1959, all of the 20,000 visitors staying at the Moscow tourist base visited the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum, and almost all of them toured the Kremlin Armory, newly opened to the public after the Twentieth Party Congress, and the All-Union Exhibition of Economic Achievements. Among other attractions, the Tret’iakov Gallery, the Central Lenin Museum, and the Ostankino Palace drew the most visitors. Over 12,000 visitors joined production tours of factories like Dinamo, Hammer and Sickle, and the children’s toy factory, and tourists could also attend evening theatrical performances.<sup>55</sup> As discussed

53. *Puteshestviia po SSSR*; see also the discussion of Moscow in Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 36–38.

54. Urbain, *L’Idiot du voyage*, 145; *Sputnik turista*, 11.

55. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6, ll. 112–134.

below, almost all foreign tourist trips originated from Moscow; for many Soviet tourists this provided their first visit to the capital city, and they asked to extend their journeys in order to see its sights (and browse in its shops). “It is so difficult to get from Siberia to the center.”<sup>56</sup> After 1962, with the reorganization of tourism institutions, the Moscow tourism council used the significant profits from its sales of *putevki* to invest in the construction of improved facilities for visitors to the capital, beginning with the fourteen-story hotel *Druzhba* in Moscow’s southwest district. By 1964, the Moscow council hosted 650,000 visitors, meanwhile sending 40,000 Muscovites to other cities such as Leningrad, Kiev, Volgograd, Riga, and Vilnius. “These trips on buses and airplanes are achieving growing popularity,” asserted Moscow officials.<sup>57</sup>

The development of passenger air travel opened new possibilities for accommodating urban tourism without providing accommodations. Tourists also desired to visit Leningrad, but as in Moscow, the possibility for tourist travel there was restricted by the shortage of beds. Before 1980, the Leningrad tourism council operated only one tourist hotel in the city and a handful of tourist bases in the suburbs.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the Kiev tourism council could not serve all of those passing through the city who wanted to stop and visit. But passenger air travel made it possible to make one-day trips between cities. A group from Leningrad’s *Skorokhod* factory flew to Moscow in one hour aboard a TU-104 in May 1960. They toured the Kremlin and the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum, and from the windows of their bus they saw shop windows, boulevards and gardens, and the “pride of Moscow,” the Moscow State University skyscraper. With nightfall, they boarded their awaiting plane and returned to Leningrad. A one-day jet trip by shock workers from Moscow’s *Trekhgornaia* manufacturing plant accomplished a similar whirlwind tour in 1962: they saw all the sights of Leningrad plus the fountains at suburban *Petrodvorets* before their return to the airport in the evening. More economically, *Skorokhod*’s tourists increasingly traveled on bus excursions to the capital cities of the Baltic republics in the 1960s.<sup>59</sup>

56. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 407 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 153, 155; d. 701 (group leader reports, 1964), l. 86 (quote). In the film *Pechki-lavochki*, the GUM department store was one attraction for Vasilii Shukshin’s fictional Siberian couple, visiting Moscow on their way to a spa vacation in the south.

57. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, ll. 18–20.

58. TsAGM SPb, f. 2683, op. 1, ch. 3 (Leningrad tourism council, 1972–76), inventory description. The hotel *Mir* was built on *Gastello Street*, off *Moskovskii Prospekt* (nine miles from central Leningrad), in 1964.

59. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 525, l. 54; *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 20 May 1960; 1 June 1962; 28 July 1964; 15 July 1966; 14 August 1968; 20 August 1968; 18 August 1972; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 14 July 1962.

### “The Great Beyond”: Expanding Domestic Destinations

As public agencies whose operating revenues depended on satisfying consumer demand, central and local tourism administrations paid close attention to the expansion of tourist facilities in the most popular destinations. Because their mission also included enlightenment and mobilization, tourism authorities sought to popularize alternative destinations off the beaten path, to open up the less-traveled regions of the Soviet Union to leisure travel. Not coincidentally, directing more tourist traffic away from the south and the sea might help to reduce some of the well-known congestion along the Soviet Union’s Black Sea coast. In the 1930s the TEU had tried to publicize the Urals as an exotic new destination, but the war and its aftermath had reined in its geographic ambitions. By 1958 the central tourism organization offered only nine package tours to the Urals and the Altai region of Siberia and three to Central Asia, all of them in Kazakhstan and focused around the developing resort at Lake Issyk-Kul. Neither the cities of Central Asia nor the natural reserves of Siberia at Lake Baikal and beyond appeared on the official tourist map in the 1950s.<sup>60</sup> Statistics for “tourist-days” for 1962, shown in table 6.2, indicate the heavy concentration of tourism in the traditional areas. Fully half of tourist-days were spent in the Russian regions of the USSR, which included the capital cities but also the Caucasus Black Sea shore and the North Caucasus.

The 1960 and 1962 reforms of the tourism agencies included the expansion of this tourist geography as part of their mission. In the same 1962 report that promised to replace tent bases with structures in the popular tourist destinations of Crimea, Transcarpathia, and the Caucasus, the chairman of the central tourism council announced plans to establish new tourist bases

**Table 6.2** Tourist-days for all-union itineraries, 1962

Region	Tourist-days	Percentage of total
Russian Federation	1,779,412	50.1
Georgia	674,687	19.2
Ukraine	661,687	18.9
Azerbaijan and Armenia	199,711	5.7
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	174,736	5.0
Total	3,505,474	100

Source: GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 521 (statistical data, 1962), ll. 1–4.

60. *Turistskie marshruty po SSSR* (1958). The offerings in 1956 were even sparser: three itineraries to the Urals, three to Altai, and two to Kazakhstan. *Turistskie marshruty po SSSR* (Moscow, 1956).



and itineraries in Belorussia and Moldavia in the west; Kirgizia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan in Central Asia; and Sakhalin Island and the Far East on the Pacific. The 1968 edition of the package tour guide now listed eleven tours to Siberia and the Urals and twelve to Central Asia, including six different itineraries that visited the capital cities of the Central Asia republics. With the 1969 decision to invest state funds in the expansion of tourism, the tourism council announced plans to build tourist hotels in Tashkent in Central Asia, Bratsk in Siberia, and Tol'iatti, the new automobile city on the Volga River. By 1979, the capacity of tourist institutions in the Urals region and beyond represented 19 percent of the country's total.<sup>61</sup> Following the pattern set in the 1930s by *On Land and On Sea*, these more exotic destinations received lavish publicity in *Turist*, whereas very little coverage was devoted to the traditional Black Sea destinations.<sup>62</sup>

### Tourist Trains

The introduction of reserved trains for package tours arose from the combination of increasing consumer demand and greater autonomy allowed to local tourism councils. Because Moscow had the country's largest population and a high concentration of intelligentsia with long summer vacations, its TEU had been the most active local promoter of tourist routes and packages. In 1960 Moscow sponsored the first all-rail package tour, itinerary number 187, a twenty-day trip from Moscow through the Caucasus and back, sending about 1,600 passengers on four trips that summer. Most of the travelers came from Moscow and its region, but the trains also included 300 foreign tourists from socialist and nonaligned countries, and they came to be known as "Friendship" trains. In their comments, tourists praised the new concept: this was a convenient way to visit five republics and their capital cities, to walk on mountain trails, to swim in two seas, and to meet representatives from so many Soviet nationalities. (Relations between Soviet and foreign tourists were not always so cordial, and many Soviet tourists resented the preferential treatment given the guests.)<sup>63</sup>

The tourist programs on these trains offered a full menu of sightseeing and recreation. In the major cities along the way (if all went well), travelers were met by guides who conducted local bus excursions. In Kiev a group saw the major attractions such as the art museum and the St. Sofia Cathedral and then by turns took boat rides along the Dnepr River. In picturesque medieval

61. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 447 (central tourism council plenum, September 1962), ll. 27, 31; d. 1272, l. 15; *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*, 20–21; V. S. Preobrazhensky and V. M. Krivosheyev, eds., *Recreational Geography of the USSR* (Moscow, 1982), 50–51.

62. Gorsuch has analyzed the representation of Estonia as a "western" tourist destination both exotically foreign but also familiarly Soviet, a "space of safely Sovietized western difference." *All This Is Your World*, 55. Tourism publications offer a rich source base for further examination of the representation of the USSR's "exotic" and "eastern" yet socialist destinations, but space does not permit that exploration here.

63. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 10 (tourist train reports, 1960), l. 3.



Tourist excursion by open touring cars to Lake Ritsa in the mountains above Sukhumi. S. V. Kurashov, L. G. Gol'dfail', and G. N. Pospelova, eds., *Kurorty SSSR* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo meditsinskoi literatury, 1962), facing page 545.

Uzhgorod, in the Carpathian Mountains, the train tourists mingled with those at the local tourist base in an evening of dancing and games. They also relished the opportunity to encounter the natural surroundings through which they traveled, and in their comments they requested that even more physical activities and sports be added to future tours. In the Caucasus, 250 of 443

passengers participated in a nighttime hike to a picturesque pass; another 350 opted to visit Lake Ritsa, always one of the highlights of any Caucasus package tour.<sup>64</sup> The itineraries also scheduled opportunities for swimming and sunbathing in the sea, lakes, or along rivers. Like tourists at stationary tourist bases, they engaged in sporting competitions, evening dances, and sing-alongs.

Passengers took their meals, in multiple shifts, in the dining cars provided by the railway administration. Expectations exceeded the capacity of the trains to serve their customers, and tourists complained about the sameness of the diet and especially the lack of fresh vegetables: a sample menu for a 1960 trip, for example, featured goulash for breakfast and dinner, with the occasional salad of tomato and cucumber. The men on the trip to the Carpathians particularly relished the excursion to a historic wine cellar, complete with tasting. In comments, tourists requested that more meals be arranged in local restaurants and cafés so that they could sample more of the local cuisine.<sup>65</sup> They wished not only to see different parts of the Soviet Union but to taste those differences.

These first train trips represented an experiment in large group travel, so organizers applied the prevailing norms for tourist bases, including a regime with its rules. It was one thing to maintain discipline over groups at a stationary tourist camp, but the mobility of the train presented special challenges. Train tourists would organize themselves into groups, and each would elect a group leader and an assistant leader. They were responsible for cleaning their own bed area in the morning and after the obligatory rest hour; they could leave the train only with the permission of the train director; and they could swim only in designated areas. If they were late, the train would leave without them. Any tourist who violated the rules would be expelled from the train and lose any remaining days of the tour. Such rules were tested on one of the very first trips when two women left the group in Tbilisi in the company of four local Georgian men. Their good time turned sour when they became victims of a group rape; trying to conceal the incident, one of the tourists caught up with the train by catching a bus, but the other wandered by accident into a military reserve, where she was arrested. In another case of tourist misbehavior, the authority of the group prevailed to overturn the rules of the trip. When two women tourists on a train through Ukraine returned drunk, under police escort, from an evening on the town, the rest of the group defended them against the normal punishment of being expelled from the train. Thanks to the solidarity of the tourists, the two young women were let off with only a reprimand and allowed to continue their journey.<sup>66</sup>

64. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 17 (tourist train reports, August–September 1961), l. 2; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 386 (tourist train comment books, 1961), ll. 72–72ob.; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 31 (tourist train report, 1962), ll. 67, 73.

65. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 12 (tourist train report, 1960), l. 5, d. 17, l. 3; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 386, l. 26ob.

66. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 9, l. 12; d. 10, ll. 14–15; d. 17, l. 3.

Train tourists left positive comments, just as did most visitors to sanatoria and rest homes. We not only rested and strengthened our muscles, noted one group, but we learned about the culture and genius of those peoples with whom we visited, talented Dagestanis, Georgians, Adzharians, and Abkhazians. The trip was very interesting, wrote another: it expanded our horizons and gave vivid impressions of the cities and the resorts of the Caucasus. But they did not shy from suggesting improvements and changes to the regime. Tourists requested more amenities such as a radio for announcements, showers, hooks for clothing, transformers for shavers, laundry and repair facilities, and “an iron—the tourist’s dream.”<sup>67</sup> The self-confidence gained from travel permitted them to impart their own ideas about what constituted a proper tourist experience.

Reviewing reports of the first year of Moscow’s tourist trains, the central tourist authority pronounced these initial trips a success, and this form of tourism quickly expanded. From its modest beginning in 1960, package train travel expanded to 138 trains in 1963 and 460 trains in 1966, carrying 110,000 passengers.<sup>68</sup> All the train trips were organized by local tourism councils, who arranged with the transportation ministry for the train services and with local tourism organizations for excursion and other services at their stops along the way. Train travel was not inexpensive, but the price of a ticket included transportation from home and eliminated the inconvenience of booking return tickets. (Other package tours, including cruises, did not include the cost of transportation to the tour’s starting point.) A *putevka* for a twenty-day train trip from Leningrad to Central Asia and back in 1968 cost 175 rubles, compared with 160 rubles for a first-class cabin on a twenty-day river cruise from Leningrad along the Volga. For most tourists, the trains provided an alternate way to travel to the sea and mountains, still the favored tourist destinations. As the number of trains expanded from 2,700 in 1969 to 6,200 in 1974, the majority of them headed south: Penza-Caucasus-Penza, Vladivostok-Caucasus-Vladivostok, Tashkent-Caucasus-Tashkent, and so forth.<sup>69</sup>

### Cruises

River and ocean cruises appealed to a different segment of the tourist public, those who preferred a more sedentary vacation experience but who also wished to expand their geographic and cultural horizons. In addition to the unforgettable cities and sites linked to Lenin’s biography along Mother Volga, “the vistas and landscapes of the beautiful Volga, constantly changing before our eyes, developed my aesthetic appreciation of nature, and brought much joy to my soul,” wrote a passenger on a 1956 sailing. The organization of river cruises had improved slowly but significantly from the hapless journeys of the 1930s. Gradually, specially built passenger boats entered the

67. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 386, ll. 8, 10, 53, 63.

68. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 750, l. 40; d. 1297, l. 20.

69. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1910, l. 21; *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*, 126–153.

service of tourism to replace the cramped and schedule-driven freight boats of the 1930s and early 1950s. Tourists often referred to them as “floating rest homes” and considered them especially appropriate for older people, who could gaze at the constantly changing landscape without leaving their deck chairs. For the more agile, each stop along the river offered city excursions (mostly on foot because of a perpetual shortage of tour buses), volleyball, mushroom gathering in the woods, and swimming.<sup>70</sup> Local tourism councils organized these river cruises, and their numbers expanded throughout the 1960s and beyond. In 1963, 55,000 tourists took organized train trips, but 274,000 passengers sailed on the forty-eight riverboat itineraries. By 1968, thirty-eight local soviets offered eighty-five different cruises along more than a dozen rivers. Prices varied by class of cabin but generally ranged from 90 to 160 rubles for a twenty-day trip. Shorter weekend cruises also offered opportunities to enjoy nature, although these also became known as “floating houses of love,” a way for illicit couples to spend a weekend in the complete privacy of their steamer cabin, from which they did not emerge for the duration of the cruise.<sup>71</sup>

Steamship sailings on the Black Sea had originally served to ferry passengers between the ports of the Caucasus Black Sea coast before railroad and then road networks linked these emerging resort areas with central Russia.<sup>72</sup> The 1954 film *The Reserve* depicts the particularly pleasing combination of travel to a destination with fun along the way. As passengers board the *Rossia* in Leningrad, en route to Sukhumi on the Black Sea coast, one advises another to take full advantage of the ship’s activities: outings and excursions, dancing, lectures, reports, movies, concerts, quizzes, charades, and medical treatments: “Don’t be lazy!”<sup>73</sup> Like the riverboat trips, the Black Sea cruises combined the self-improving ambience of the spa with the added feature of changing scenery and land-based excursions. In 1957 the ocean fleet launched the *Admiral Nakhimov* to navigate the route between Crimea and the Caucasus shore; with 1,200 berths it was three times bigger than the *Rossia*. This sailing joined the list of all-union package tours as the eighteen-day itinerary number 250, leaving from Odessa and calling at Sevastopol’, Sochi, Sukhumi, Batumi, and Yalta. Taking advantage of the invitation to

70. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 2, d. 150 (river cruise comment books, 1956), l. 21 (quote); d. 151 (river cruise comment books, 1956), l. 28ob.; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 385 (river cruise comment books, 1960–61), l. 264a; *Skorokhodovskii rabochii* contains a lengthy travelogue of one Leningrader’s cruise in 1970: 29 July 1970; 6 August 1970; 14 August 1970; *Trud*, 8 July 1970.

71. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 631, ll. 28–30; *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*, 110–125; Popovskii, *Tretii lishnii*, 131.

72. *Sovetskoe chernomor’e*, comp. A. Ivanov and P. Mikhailov, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1955), 331.

73. *Zapasnoi igrok* (*The Reserve*, shown in the United States as *The Boys from Leningrad*), dir. Semen Timoshenko, Lenfil’m, 1954. More realistically, tourists would travel by train to Odessa and take their ship from there, not from Leningrad.





Vacationers in the salon of the “floating rest home” *Voroshilov*, 1947. Note the guitar player on deck. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0–143434. Used with permission of the archive.

local initiative, the Sochi excursion bureau and others also organized their own sailings between the Caucasus coast and Crimea. Comments from passengers convey the popularity of cruise travel that combined the traditional spa amenities and scenery. “We recouped our strength and our health, and had a marvelous vacation,” wrote one couple after their 1971 journey. Other passengers noted with pleasure the excellent light orchestra and singer, the beauty contests (“Miss *Rossiiia*,” “Miss *Abkhaziia*”) organized by the cultural director, and the interesting excursions ashore: “No one was bored!”<sup>74</sup>

With their array of cultural activities, filling meals, paid entertainment, and excursions, these ocean cruises represented the height of Soviet tourist luxury. The eighteen-day cruises on the *Admiral Nakhimov*, *Abkhaziia*, and *Rossiiia* cost between 90 and 230 rubles, depending on the class of service and the season. A deluxe berth in the peak season (June through September) cost 230 rubles; third-class accommodations ranged from 110 to 140 rubles.

74. GAGS, f. 261, op. 1, d. 91 (Black Sea cruise comment books, 1969–70), ll. 4, 4ob., 13, 25, 40–42, 56, 77–77ob.; “We recouped our strength,” d. 167 (ocean cruise reports, 1971), l. 39; d. 41 (Black Sea cruise comment books, 1967–69), ll. 2ob., 10ob., 13ob., “No one was bored,” 12, 14; *Trud*, 26 July 1957; *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*, 49.





Tourists taking the sea breezes on the deck of a cruise ship on the Arctic Ocean. *Turist*, no. 2 (1967): 5.

Compared with other types of tours (see table 6.3), these cruises were priced in the same range as river cruises, but when the cost of travel to the tour's starting point was factored in, they were more expensive than tourist trains.

#### Automobile Tourism

With the increased production of passenger automobiles in the 1960s and later, traveling to a vacation destination “in your own car” became possible for many Soviet citizens and desired by many more.<sup>75</sup> Just as with other kinds of travel, officials sought to control and manage the message and meaning auto tourists derived from their travels. We want to attract the broad mass to auto tourism, insisted S.S. Vol'kenshtein, chairman of the Moscow club of automobile tourists in 1965. “But we also want to steer their travels in

75. See Siegelbaum, *Cars for Comrades*.

**Table 6.3.** Comparative costs per day of tourist packages, 1968

Type of tour	Length in days	Total cost in rubles	Cost per day
Black Sea cruise deluxe, peak season	18	230	12.78
Black Sea cruise, third class, peak season	18	110	6.11
Volga cruise, first class	20	170	8.50
Volga cruise, fourth class	20	95	4.75
Tourist train Moscow-Caucasus	20	150	7.50
Around the Caucasus, bus	20	110	5.50
Western Caucasus, on foot	20	60	3.00
Yalta, radial	20	65	3.25

Source: *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*, comp. P. Rakhmanov (Moscow, 1968), 49, 118, 138, 48, 33, 50.

the right channel—toward learning about historical places, like places connected with the victory over fascist Germany.” At the same time, tourism officials attempted to provide appropriate services for this burgeoning segment of the vacationing public. In addition to roads, of course, automobile tourists needed places to stay that could offer the necessary amenities: parking spaces, gasoline stations, and repair shops. The Ministry of Trade proposed in 1955 to build a whole network of pensions dedicated to automobile tourists, and the TEU also recognized the need to cater to this population, but as always, facilities lagged behind demand. As one pioneering auto tourist wrote to the newspaper *Trud* in 1959, there were hundreds of travelers like him, who wished to just “pick up and go,” but auto tourists lacked maps and guides that could point out where to buy gasoline or food in the towns along their way; if they managed to find a room for the night in a hotel, there was no place to leave the car. Many ended up just sleeping overnight in their automobiles. The hospitable roadside motor lodge depicted in the 1957 film *To the Black Sea*, with its clean and plentiful rooms and a bright, well-stocked restaurant, found few real life exemplars. The 1959 tourist guide’s chapter on automobile tourism explicitly advised making the six-day journey from Moscow to the Caucasus in caravans of at least six cars, preferably all of the same make so that spare parts could be stockpiled and shared. Never, ever drive alone, warned the handbook.<sup>76</sup>

By necessity and by choice, automobile tourists tended to be more independent and unorganized than their comrades choosing to book package

76. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, l. 32 (quote); A.I. Burov, ed. *Spravochnik-putevoditel' po pansionatom i kurorttorgov* (Moscow, 1955), an automobilist’s guide to tourist facilities; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1272, l. 11; *Trud*, 16 October 1959; B. Ia. Gartenberg, “Avtomobil'nyi turizm,” in *Sputnik turista*, 302–303.

tours. The auto enthusiasts' journal *Behind the Wheel* (*Za Rulem*) instructed readers on how to convert their Pobeda and Moskvich automobiles into campers, thus solving the problem of sleeping facilities and allowing them to vacation in any picturesque spot, in the bosom of nature. Others more ambitiously sought to raise automobile tourism to the level of sporting tourism; some tourist councils and clubs sponsored automobile sections, and auto tourists too could earn the Tourist USSR badge on their travels. Just to survive the drive from Moscow to Leningrad and back, quipped one fan, qualified one to be a tourist in the sporting sense. But wouldn't it be nice also to stop and see the sights there?<sup>77</sup> Tourism differed from sport precisely in the combination of experiences and sights the tourist encountered: physical, cultural, social, and emotional.

### Autostop

The expansion of automobile (and truck) production made possible another form of tourism, one especially geared toward young people with limited means: hitchhiking. Soviet law prohibited truck drivers from carrying passengers, but travel to Poland had exposed Soviet tourists to the system there known as "autostop," which could provide order and control to catching rides.<sup>78</sup> Under this system, prospective hitchhikers purchased booklets of coupons, good for specified distances, with which to pay drivers who picked them up. Truck drivers could cash in their coupons for prizes. In this way, money did not change hands, there was no black market in transportation, and young people could become more mobile. Beginning in the Leningrad region, the practice became popular throughout the Baltic republics in the early 1960s. In 1965, ninety thousand tourists had purchased and cashed in the coupons, but autostop still drew opposition from traffic police and others worried about creating a black market in transport. Transport agencies feared the loss of revenue from paying bus and train passengers. Proponents of the system pronounced it a success, especially among the student youth. "The working class earns money and it can travel on buses or trains or airplanes, but students are the most happy, energetic people, and autostop is convenient for them," insisted one supporter in 1966.<sup>79</sup> Autostop provided one more opportunity to segment the tourism market by ability to pay and expectations of convenience.

### Tourist Health Camps

Dotted all over the Soviet Union were several more layers of tourist camps, operating on small scales and largely autonomous from the central

77. *Za rulem*, no. 1 (April 1956): 22–23; no. 3 (June 1956): 1; GARF, f. 7576, op. 14, d. 63 (tourism section plenum, May 1953), ll. 51–53, 96; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, ll. 11–12.

78. *Trud*, 16 December 1959; 18 June 1964.

79. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 447, l. 116; d. 631, l. 90; d. 1051 (autostop conference, May–June 1966), l. 13 (quote).

trade union or tourism authorities. Fishing and hunting cabins proliferated on rivers and lakes and in the forests, providing primitive accommodations for outdoor enthusiasts. In 1965 there were 1.4 million users of fishing and hunting cabins, compared with 613,000 travelers on planned package tours. Beginning in the mid-1950s, local collectives began to build informal “tourist health” camps, places where students, workers, and families could spend their vacations in inexpensive natural surroundings. In the early 1960s central trade union authorities encouraged the expansion of these camps under the rubric of tourism development; they monitored their proliferation and included the campers in their overall statistics on the growth of tourism.<sup>80</sup>

On the whole, these local camps received little other guidance and fewer resources. The most successful of them began as tent camps and gradually constructed more permanent dining halls and cabins. The Skorokhod factory in Leningrad had expanded its prewar rest home into a sports base in 1960; workers themselves built the cabins. Some camps operated very much like official tourist bases, with strict discipline and obligatory morning exercises; they organized overnight hikes to battlefield sites and awarded the Tourist USSR badge. There were bases that became so successful that workers from their sponsoring enterprises preferred to spend their holidays there, with their friends, rather than to take a *putevka* to the south. Some of these camps worked better when they limited their clientele to student youth; others benefited from bringing together vacationers of all ages. One camp belonging to a technical institute appealed to all the segments of the institution of learning: the students played active sports, while their professors played checkers and gave talks about their trips abroad.<sup>81</sup> Such camps resembled the Chautauqua movement of late nineteenth-century America or the Family Vacation Villages of post-1945 France, which offered vacationers of modest means the opportunity for leisure in the aid of education and self-improvement.<sup>82</sup> All together, the Soviet health camps offered an accessible and inexpensive vacation option for hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens who were unable or did not wish to procure a *putevka* to a local rest home or for a long-distance journey.

### Travel Abroad

The dream of Soviet tourism had long included foreign travel on the purposeful knowledge-building agenda. Financial constraints made tourism abroad impossible in the 1930s, and after the war the official policy of the Soviet Union turned its citizens' gaze inward.<sup>83</sup> Only military personnel and

80. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, ll. 54–55, 81; d. 452 (materials on mass tourism, 1962), and d. 1297, l. 72, provide statistical breakdowns of their usage.

81. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 6 May 1960; GARF, f. 9559, op. 1, d. 1193 (materials on sports health camps, 1969); d. 977 (health camp directors' seminar, April 1967), ll. 30, 85.

82. Aron, *Working at Play*, chap. 4; Furlough, “Making Mass Vacations.”

83. Anne E. Gorsuch, “‘There’s No Place like Home’: Soviet Tourism in Late Stalinism,” *Slavic Review* 62, no. 4 (2003): 760–785.

officials ventured beyond Soviet borders in the first decade after the end of hostilities. All of this changed quite dramatically in 1955, when Nikita Khrushchev's embrace of the world stage at the July summit meeting in Vienna led to an opening to the West known as the "spirit of Geneva," including a sudden proliferation of tourist opportunities abroad. Both the trade union tourism authority and Inturist began to organize group tours abroad for carefully selected Soviet citizens, primarily to fraternal neighbors in the communist bloc, through exchanges that did not require the expenditure of scarce foreign currency. But tours were also arranged to some capitalist countries as well. Most of this travel took place within Europe, although tourist groups from the Far East might travel to Asian destinations such as Mongolia, China, Korea, and Vietnam. Nonaligned countries around the world also hosted Soviet tourists. *Trud* announced the departure of a group traveling to India on 8 March 1957, the "thirteenth group of Soviet tourists" to travel there that year.<sup>84</sup> The appeal of India as a destination may have been influenced by Indian popular cinema, which, beginning with a film festival in 1954, had become wildly popular as a result of its exotic settings, upbeat music, and happy endings. Indian film stars visiting in the mid-1950s attracted huge crowds of fans.<sup>85</sup>

In 1959 *Trud* reported on the expansion of international travel with the headline, "Fifty Countries Await Soviet Tourists." In addition to the familiar destinations of the socialist bloc, tourists this year would travel again to India, Pakistan, and the United Arab Republic, and new itineraries had been introduced that would take Soviet travelers to Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, and Iraq. For 1960 there would be trips to Mexico, Argentina, the United States, and Canada and a cruise around Asia, calling at ports in Japan, China, Indonesia, Ceylon, India, Somalia, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey.<sup>86</sup> Guidebooks analogous to the annual domestic lists of itineraries did not exist, let alone comprehensive figures on actual tourist travel, but the reports in the trade union archives confirm the growth and scope of these tours.

Soviet tourism abroad took the form of sightseeing rather than sports or rest, but it remained resolutely purposeful and harnessed to the greater interests of the regime and the economy. In theory, "specialized" groups of employees in a single industry or type of work traveled together; their tours were constructed to allow them to visit counterparts abroad, exchange knowledge about production and work processes, and provide an economic basis of friendship and fraternity. Those fortunate enough to be sent abroad would then report back to their mates at home, sharing what they had learned about production methods and technology.<sup>87</sup> Nature and sporting tourism never figured very prominently in these tours; by the 1970s, tours abroad would often

84. Gorsuch, introduction to *All This Is Your World*; *Trud*, 9 March 1957.

85. Sudha Rajagopalan, *Indian Films in Soviet Cinema: The Culture of Movie-Going after Stalin* (Bloomington, IN, 2008).

86. *Trud*, 28 November 1959.

87. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 375 (foreign tourism officials' conference, September 1960).

combine sedentary rest in a spa or on the Black Sea coast with limited urban sightseeing.

Travel abroad changed the culture of Soviet tourism. It opened Soviet travelers' eyes not just to different cultures, foods, and representations of history but to new tourism norms and practices. Those who traveled to Eastern Europe (and the lucky few who went farther west) encountered the successor to a well-developed prewar bourgeois tourist industry, where hotels and their associated services, restaurants, and trained city guides constituted a normal part of the tourist experience. Soviet tourism officials also learned from their foreign travels and sought to apply these lessons to their efforts at home. The fruits of this knowledge would be apparent as the Soviet tourism industry continued to evolve into the 1970s, as chapter 7 will show.

From the beginning, foreign travel was complicated and expensive. Anne Gorsuch has described how individuals were chosen for the plum trips abroad: prospective tourists filled out questionnaires and were then vetted locally by their employer, trade union organization, and party officials. "We do all this verification so that they will return from abroad." Officials wanted to ensure that the tourists selected for these trips would be worthy representatives of the Soviet Union, and they believed that sending homogeneous occupational groups rather than random collections of tourists would help enforce better discipline. Having been chosen for the trip, the tourist normally had to pay out of pocket for the tour and transportation to Moscow, the starting point, and this was hardly a trivial expense. In 1960, a twelve-day tour to Czechoslovakia cost 1,250 rubles starting from Moscow; for a tourist in the Far East, a trip to a European destination could cost as much as 5,000 rubles. Even a four-day bus trip to Finland cost 800 rubles, the average monthly pay for a Soviet worker.<sup>88</sup> Generally, tourists had to take the trip that was offered at their workplace, but by the end of the 1950s, they had developed strong preferences for the most familiar Slavic countries of Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, and many balked at trips to Germany and Poland. Others, even after going through all the formalities of permissions and approval, would decide in the end that the trip was not worth the expense and withdraw in favor of a quiet rest home vacation.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the cost, these trips were highly prized, and the numbers of Soviet citizens traveling abroad grew consistently from the modest beginnings in 1955. Reliable statistics on foreign travel are notoriously elusive, since tourists traveled under different sponsorships, among them trade union organizations, Inturist, and the Komsomol travel bureau Sputnik. The Russian historian

88. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 82–86; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 375, ll. 51 (quote), 74, 56, 108.

89. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 375, ll. 1–13, 41, 26; *Martenovka*, 21 July 1960. Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma*, 154, also acknowledges that Bulgaria is the most popular destination, but the figures published for 1968–76 in *Turist* have travelers to Poland outnumbering those to Bulgaria, at least in these years, by a factor of two to one. I cannot explain this discrepancy.



G. P. Dolzhenko asserts that a half million tourists traveled abroad in 1956 alone, but Anne Gorsuch suggests that the initial numbers were more modest: she calculates that those traveling abroad between 1955 and 1964 numbered approximately half a million in total. There is no question, however, about the explosive growth in this traffic. Dolzhenko estimates that 1.8 million tourists traveled abroad in 1970, a figure corroborated by *Turist*, which reports additionally that about 1 million of these travelers went to socialist countries and 816,000 to capitalist countries. John Bushnell, estimating from a variety of sources, suggests that between 1960 and 1976, approximately 11 million Soviet tourists had traveled to Eastern Europe alone. The numbers were large, and they were growing. A retrospective look at domestic tourism in 1989 reported that between 700,000 and 800,000 tourists signed up annually for the all-union domestic itineraries; *Turist* wrote that a total of 2.6 million Soviet tourists traveled abroad in 1976.<sup>90</sup> In terms of centrally planned tourism, then, foreign travel had become the dominant form of the package tour.

Yet despite their popularity, or maybe because of it, these foreign excursions produced great anxiety in a regime nervous about the impression that Soviet citizens would make on strangers. For each group of thirty to sixty people, a specially trusted leader assumed responsibility for their discipline and behavior and filed a report with tourist and trade union officials upon their return. The many hundreds of such reports in the Inturist and trade union archives open an unparalleled window onto the practices and attitudes of the postwar Soviet tourist, allowing us to see the world outside through the tourists' eyes (as mediated through those of the group leader). Unlike the diaries of independent tourist groups that tend to narrate epic encounters with nature, these group leader reports focus on touristic consumption and social interactions, both between hosts and guests and among guests. They offer a unique perspective on the Soviet tourists' subjective representations of moving through touristic space, as Anne Gorsuch has argued.<sup>91</sup> There is nothing comparable for domestic tourism, but some of the norms and attitudes conveyed here can be used to characterize the postwar Soviet tourist more generally.<sup>92</sup> Such reports must be used cautiously as sources, as Gorsuch suggests: most of their authors understood the limits of what could be said and the consequences for their future foreign travel of fulfilling their solemn responsibilities as group leaders. The behavior of group members

90. Dolzhenko, *Istoriia turizma*, 154; Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 18–19; *Turist*, no. 6 (1971): 14; John Bushnell, "The 'New Soviet Man' Turns Pessimist," in *The Soviet Union since Stalin*, ed. Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Robert Sharlet (Bloomington, IN, 1980), 192; *Turist*, no. 12 (1989): 6; *Turist*, no. 6 (1977): 23.

91. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 22–24.

92. The reports up to 1970 are contained in the archives of the central council and of Inturist (to a lesser extent). There is evidence that after 1970, the reports were archived only at the level of the regional tourism councils. See Aleksei Popov, "Sovetskie turisty za rubezhom: Ideologiya, kommunikatsiya, emotsii (po otchetam rukovoditelei turistskikh grupp)," *Istorichna panorama: Collection of Scientific Papers*, 6th ed. (Chernovei, 2008), 49–56.

therefore occupied a large space. But the reports were not merely about surveillance: they also provided officials with voluminous information about how tourism was organized and consumed abroad. Filtered through reports like these and aided by visits of official delegations, trips to Eastern Europe and beyond helped to change the profile of Soviet tourism from a volunteer enterprise of enthusiasts to a leisure industry based on rational, pleasurable, and organized consumption.<sup>93</sup>

Soviet tourists to foreign countries, even socialist lands, carried significant extra baggage in addition to their modest suitcases. The disciplinary responsibility of the group leader and other covert surveillance agents placed tourists under special scrutiny. Each tourist group received extensive briefings on what to expect and how to behave; only the most politically experienced were entrusted with explaining Soviet policies to inquiring hosts.<sup>94</sup> Soviet tourists were not mere sightseers; they were representatives of the oldest and most politically developed socialist nation in the world, and as such, they tried to distance themselves from “ordinary” sightseers. They were fact finders and goodwill ambassadors, emphasized the head of Inturist in 1962 (just like the shock workers in 1930 aboard the *Abkhaziia* sailing around Europe). In their specialized occupational groups, they transmitted professional knowledge, and the high point of their tours was often reported to be friendly meetings with worker collectives in their specialties.<sup>95</sup> Mingling among tourists from other countries, both capitalist and socialist, Soviet travelers were expected to be able to tell about their nation’s achievements and illustrate the successes of the Soviet system. Anne Gorsuch elaborates on the performative responsibilities of Soviet tourists abroad, which were especially critical in the first decade of foreign tourism. “Tourists to Western Europe were on a vacation, but it was a working vacation,” she writes. Soviet tourists abroad and particularly to capitalist countries “combined in an ensemble meant to display and perform a new internationalist, post-Stalinist Soviet identity.”<sup>96</sup> Ethnic non-Russians had a particular responsibility abroad. Tourists from Central Asia “travel to the countries of the socialist camp and to capitalist countries in order to show

93. I deliberately looked only at trip reports to Eastern Europe and a few nonaligned countries, since my purpose was to use them to understand how Soviet tourists traveled as socialists. The added complexity of encounters with Western capitalism is not the goal of my study. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, provides a complex analysis of the anxieties and adventures of travel abroad in the Khrushchev period, including the “near abroad” of Estonia, Eastern Europe, and the capitalist West.

94. Popov, “Sovetskie turisty za rubezhom,” describes the formation of the “ideological” group, a subset of the tourist group that would serve on the front lines of international communication.

95. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 468 (foreign tourism officials’ conference, March 1962), ll. 47, 491, 161; d. 407, l. 59.

96. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 109, 110.

that the republics of Central Asia are independent republics, not backwards as they were forty years ago.”<sup>97</sup>

For these citizen-diplomats, the tolerance of inappropriate behavior was much narrower abroad than at home, and the penalties could be more severe: tourists who violated the rules would lose the right to travel abroad again. The group as well as the leader set and enforced norms of behavior: lack of punctuality or losing one's documents wasted everyone's precious time and was commonly noted in the reports, as were cases of individuals who wandered outside the group orbit.<sup>98</sup> Leaving the group was doubly dangerous abroad: not only did it violate the normal code of the Soviet tourist collective, but inexperienced tourists on their own in foreign countries might end up in compromising situations. Many tourists wished to take up invitations to visit new acquaintances at home or in restaurants; in some cases, this might have been a worthy pursuit of international friendship, but frequently enough Soviet tourists, often females, were looking for romantic companionship and sexual encounters. Extramarital sexual activity was a common adjunct to normal domestic tourist and vacation pleasures; in the trip reports, vacation romances with fellow Soviet travelers were sometimes noted with disapproval, but it was sex with foreigners that presented the gravest dangers. Instances of “sexual debauchery” abroad were noted, as was the absence of such behavior. (“The behavior of the group was outstanding.”) Drinking to excess, “the joy of the Rus,” always drew censure for the lack of culture it revealed, but it was especially dangerous abroad, when drunkenness could lead to brawls and fistfights as well as to sexual relations and uncensored speech. The drunk tourist Smirnov received a reprimand for an unsanctioned midnight swim but even more for insisting in his defense that once he decided to do something, he would do it, even if “Khrushchev himself” disapproved.<sup>99</sup> These everyday behaviors, tolerable at home, could hurt the reputation of Soviet tourists abroad.

Given the heavy responsibilities of representing their country and their lack of experience in international travel, many tourists expressed anxieties about how to behave and what to wear and about mealtime etiquette.<sup>100</sup> But they also brought with them distinctive expectations about what to see and do. Above all, and in the practical tradition of proletarian tourism, some

97. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 390 (tourism seminar, March 1961), ll. 56 (quote), 16, 17, 33.

98. Trip reports would specify individuals with a notation that they should not be allowed on further foreign tours. E.g. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1115, l. 29; see also Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 119. When a tourist from a Kiev group visiting Bulgaria violated the norms of discipline, the entire group met to discuss her behavior. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1109 (group leader reports, 1967), l. 63; d. 1104 (group leader reports, 1967), l. 4.

99. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 491 (group leader reports, 1962), ll. 3, 88, 89; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 390, l. 7; d. 409 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 151, 3, 101, 121; d. 421 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 1, 20, “Khrushchev himself,” 25; “behavior of the group,” d. 716 (group leader reports, 1964), l. 2.

100. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 701, ll. 2, 139.

of them wished to witness socialist modernity and not the bourgeois European past. Presented with their planned itinerary in Romania, a group of tourists expressed their disappointment: "The program surprised us, there was not one planned meeting with workers, not one visit to an industrial enterprise or agricultural cooperative. It was an ordinary tourist program." Factory visits appeared on many itineraries, and tourists especially looked forward to exchanging stories of work experience with their fraternal counterparts.<sup>101</sup> Here we must worry about whether these accounts reflect real desires or the wishes of the authorities who would read the reports, but I accept the interest in socialist modern as genuine. Industrial tourism had long occupied an honored place in the Soviet tourist movement, even if the exclusively industrial itineraries did not outlive the first five-year plan. The chairman of the TEU in 1961 recalled fondly his first industrial visit to the Gor'kii auto plant as a schoolboy during a Volga cruise in 1936: "I remember it to this day."<sup>102</sup> Organizing specialized tourist groups by occupation maximized the utility of such trips abroad. A group of staff in the Soviet chemical industry visited counterpart enterprises in Czechoslovakia in 1961, learning about worker pay, training, and production processes, knowledge they could usefully apply back home. Soviet tourists abroad had a mission; they were serious travelers and had a duty to learn and to apply what they had learned. A trip without meetings with workers and visits to enterprises was considered incomplete.<sup>103</sup>

In visiting historical sites abroad, Soviet tourists likewise wanted most of all to see places that represented the greatest achievements of socialism. Memorials to World War II battles and victims occupied a solemn place on itineraries, and each successive wave of Soviet tourists brought flowers to place on such commemorative sites. They also expected to learn about the great moments of the socialist revolution: tourists to Hungary, evidently oblivious to the violent 1956 uprising against Soviet rule, were disappointed that their guides in 1962 were unwilling to answer questions about the "revolutionary struggle of the Hungarian people" and the economic achievements of the Hungarian People's Republic. Likewise, a visit of a group from Altai to Romania in 1963 regretted not learning more about the building of socialism in contemporary Romania.<sup>104</sup> Group leader reports regularly protested

101. GARF, f. 9612, op. 1, d. 563 (group leader reports, 1963), l. 45 (quote); GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 410 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 154–155, 3; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 426 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 30, 173, 218; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 691 (group leader reports, 1964), l. 41.

102. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, l. 103. My personal tourist bias may play a role in my interpretation: I retain vivid memories of my own visits to industrial enterprises that were part of a larger journey, from the Quaker Oats plant in Cedar Rapids, Iowa ("oats shot from guns") to Ford's River Rouge plant in Michigan to the robot-driven Perrier plant in southern France.

103. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 409, ll. 167–170; d. 1104, l. 19.

104. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 488 (group leader reports, 1962), l. 2; d. 701, l. 16; d. 875 (group leader reports, 1965), l. 2; d. 491, l. 52; d. 598 (group leader reports, 1963), l. 35.

the amount of time spent learning about old kings and visiting “monuments of the past.” Worst of all was the “excessive” amount of time spent touring churches and chapels, an especially common complaint from tourists to socialist Poland. “The entire group received an unpleasant impression from the religious spirit everywhere: the influence of the Catholic Church is enormous, and the Polish guides did not show us any of the new life of the country, and the great work that maybe is being done there.”<sup>105</sup>

It is possible that the preferences expressed in the reports reflected those of the party loyalists who were trustworthy enough to lead these groups and had been thoroughly briefed on the purposeful nature of Soviet tourism. But not all group leaders complained about their sightseeing agenda. Many reports and individual accounts expressed unalloyed wonder at all the tourist objects they were shown, from churches to museums to train stations. Indeed, although Soviet tourists brought with them particular expectations about how to be a good socialist tourist, these trips abroad—much more than the standard tours of the homeland—helped teach Soviet citizens how to be tourists, how to see, what to value in a guide and a guidebook, and how to assimilate what they had learned.

As Soviet tourists ventured away from home, whether domestically or abroad to the place that sociologist Orvar Löfgren calls “Elsewhereland,” they joined the larger movement of modern tourists seeking integration into an expanded social universe. The tourist gains pleasure from successfully encountering the extraordinary, writes anthropologist John Urry. Dean MacCannell suggests that “all tourists desire this deeper involvement with society and culture to some degree; it is a basic component of their motivation to travel.” He goes on to argue that the method by which tourists gain this deeper involvement is in the navigation of the system of signs known as tourist attractions. The sights on a tourist itinerary, whether cathedrals, steel mills, or war memorials, gain their meaning through the “ceremonial ratification” of the itinerary itself.<sup>106</sup> The tourist object, the sight, is not just a spot on a map but a cultural production. Tourists learned how to interpret these productions with the aid of the tour guide and guidebook and by sharing their impressions with their fellow travelers.

The reports of Soviet tourists abroad allow us to appreciate how this tourist knowledge was produced. Travel abroad intensified the tourists’ engagement with these cultural productions precisely because they were so different from the familiar everyday tourist objects at home, whose signs were mediated through the well-understood codes of Soviet ideology. They learned from one another as well as from their guides how to respond. Take, for example, reactions to visits to sites of Nazi death camps. Tourists heard from the

105. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 409, l. 134; d. 491, l. 51; d. 878 (group leader reports, 1965), l. 149; for Hungary: d. 699 (group leader reports, 1964), l. 93; for Poland: d. 1104, l. 4; d. 407, ll. 124, 169, 110 (quote); d. 691, l. 35; d. 721 (group leader reports, 1964), l. 51.

106. Löfgren, *On Holiday*, 1–5; Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 11; MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 10, 14.

Polish guides at Oswiecim (Auschwitz) a story of egalitarian suffering, where “POWs and citizens of many lands were killed.” Despite the narrative that ignored the magnitude and meaning of Jewish victimhood, Soviet tourists nonetheless uniformly remarked on the “staggering” impressions created by being in the physical presence of these memories. “People stood silently in front of the horrible gate.” On visiting another death camp near Gdansk, a group leader wrote, “It is impossible to look upon the monstrous gas chambers, crematoria, and barracks without emotion and a feeling of deep indignation.”<sup>107</sup> Some reports included similarly careful reflection on many of the attractions visited; others more laconically listed as many of the sights as could be accommodated in their report, as if to allow supervisors back home to verify that the tourist plan had been fulfilled. But even these catalogs reinforced the method by which tourist knowledge was produced: every attraction embodied historical and cultural meaning, or it would not have been on the tour, and the job of the tourist was to listen to the guides and appropriate the meanings and accept their interpretations.

This kind of tourism—both traveling and seeing—was hard work, and another kind of knowledge the Soviet tourists gained from their trips abroad was how to cope with the effort. They noted the fatigue of intensive sightseeing agendas. “This ‘gallop around Europe’ is very tiring physically,” advised one group leader. Complicated itineraries with long waits for transfers also added to tourist fatigue. Many complained that late arrivals and early departures compounded the sense of exhaustion. Even travel on cruise ships could be tiring, involving much walking and carrying luggage.<sup>108</sup> In addition to physical stress came added nervous exhaustion from confronting the unknown day after day. A group of automobile tourists (fifteen tourists in five cars) worried that changing their route into Czechoslovakia had cost them precious gasoline reserves: would they have enough to last the trip? Another traveler worried about the potential shock of his first border crossing. Others feared to betray their ignorance of basic table manners and even refrained from eating meals in order not to transgress. On trips that combined health resort vacation with sightseeing, tourists recommended that the sightseeing part should come first so that they could then recover from their exertions.<sup>109</sup> As more and more groups made these journeys abroad, tours were adjusted to make them less tiring, and the travelers themselves learned to become better tourists by being forewarned about the potential rigors involved.

107. “POWs and citizens,” GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 421, l. 3; also d. 691, l. 36; d. 721, l. 21; “staggering,” d. 407, l. 33; “People stood silently,” *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 23 August 1966; “It is impossible to look,” GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 597 (group leader reports, 1963), l. 46.

108. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 716, ll. 121 (“gallop”), 28, 12, 18, 37; d. 504 (materials on foreign tourism, 1962), l. 72; d. 487 (group leader reports, 1962), l. 25; d. 407, ll. 68, 86; d. 421, l. 5; d. 893 (group leader reports, 1965), ll. 65–66.

109. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 491, ll. 50–51; *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 20 August 1976; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 597, ll. 152–53; d. 422 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 37, 38.



Not all Soviet tourists found the encounter with even a fraternal socialist other to be as horizon-expanding and enlightening as tourism activists and theorists might have hoped. For some, the unfamiliar cultures and surroundings threw up a barrier that nullified any gain of pleasure from the encounter. As one group leader commented on a rest stay at a Bulgarian Black Sea resort, "In general, I would like to note that our tourists abroad had to spend their vacation time not in the way they are accustomed and according to the traditions and customs we have learned and that we don't want to give up even when in a foreign country, that is, in a collective, with our music, our art, our games and dances." Instead they had to spend their evenings in "alien and not always pleasant" restaurants and bars.<sup>110</sup> The confrontation with rock and roll produced particular dissonance and even revulsion. Tourists in Poland refused to learn the twist from local women and taught their hosts Ukrainian folk dances instead. A demonstration of the latest twist by Algerian tourists in Bulgaria caused similar offense: "The movements and gestures suggested something sexual," and the Soviets repaid the favor by performing another folk dance. "We let them know that we don't accept the bad parts of Western culture."<sup>111</sup>

More than anything else, Soviet tourists found foreign food customs the most alienating aspect of their encounters abroad. The same groups that readily absorbed the sights and attractions of socialist Poland or Germany could not extend the same openness to new experiences at their dining tables. Soviet tourists expected the same types of meals that at home "corresponded to medical and health needs": large and filling breakfasts and dinners and light suppers. Although many reports judged the food to be fine, some tourists had a harder time adjusting not only to meal proportions but to various national cuisines. German food in particular produced many negative comments: sandwiches and sausages for breakfast and supper were "not suitable" for Soviet tourists. The Hungarians used too many peppers, and the Czechoslovak menus of stewed meat and boiled potatoes were boring. There should be more bread, many wrote, and it would have been nice to have the occasional "pleasant surprise" of Russian cabbage soup or Ukrainian beet borshch.<sup>112</sup> Soviet tourists were used to complaining about the food in their domestic accommodations, but as we have seen, they were also very conservative in their willingness to try new things even at home. The security of familiar food was even more important for travelers abroad.

110. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 866 (group leader reports, 1965), l. 43.

111. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 407, l. 125; d. 597, ll. 5–6; quote from d. 866, l. 156. A German woman found Soviet tourists like these "boring," and predicted that they too would eventually adopt contemporary dances that were now forbidden inside the USSR. *Ibid.*, d. 487, l. 24.

112. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, 491, l. 106 (Bulgaria), d. 699, l. 65 (Hungary); d. 598, ll. 25 (Romania), 79; d. 865, ll. 4, 13 (Czechoslovakia); d. 1104, l. 27 (German Democratic Republic); d. 487, l. 25; d. 592 (group leader reports, 1963), l. 4; d. 701, l. 123; d. 878, ll. 35, 51, 69, 75, 102, 111, 146, 147; d. 468, l. 80; d. 1315 (group leader reports, 1969), l. 44; d. 701, l. 123; d. 1342 (group leader reports, 1969), l. 32, d. 597, l. 55.

Some of these tourists were so unhappy they demanded to return home before the end of their visits. Even if a trip abroad was the “great event in their lives,” not all Soviet travelers mastered the techniques of modern sightseeing.<sup>113</sup> Soviet tourists abroad (including group leaders) ran the gamut from self-satisfied patriots interested only in confirming their prior impressions, to the genuinely curious, bringing open minds and eagerly soaking up all the new experiences to which they were exposed. The superior, proud, and patriotic tourist abroad traveled outside familiar borders carrying a portable shell of Soviet identity, under which all observations could be categorized. Their lens of Soviet patriotism allowed them to celebrate Soviet achievements and to take umbrage when they perceived real or imagined slights. For some of them, the goal of tourism was less to expand their horizons than to confirm their own sense of socialist supremacy. This imperial hauteur might also have masked an underlying fear of inferiority, akin to MacCannell’s shameful tourists who are afraid they are not seeing everything the way it “ought” to be seen.<sup>114</sup>

Celebrating and honoring Soviet achievements past and present, the tourists could remind themselves of their privileged place in the world. Tourists to Czechoslovakia at the time Yuri Gagarin completed the first manned space flight in 1961 happily joined a rally and festive dinner to mark the day of the “triumph of Soviet science.” When sharing production experience with their work counterparts, Soviet tourists were proud to see that their hosts had borrowed techniques from the USSR. Every tour included visits to Soviet war monuments, reinforcing the sense that the locals owed their liberation to the efforts of the Soviet army and people.<sup>115</sup>

Correspondingly, when the hosts seemed unimpressed with these achievements (“America also helped to liberate us”), the Soviet guests took offense.<sup>116</sup> In Poland they felt insulted when taken to see the grave of Marshal Pilsudski, whom the Soviets knew as the leader of anti-Soviet troops during the Russian civil war. They cared little about Pilsudski’s place as the first marshal of the Polish people. Many groups expressed irritation when their dining tables were not marked with small Soviet flags, especially when other tourist groups had their national flags on display. They seemed surprised when encountering openly hostile behavior, such as the refusal in 1964 of a Polish elevator operator to take a tourist to her floor: “The Russian pig can climb on her own.” In Czechoslovakia, a group managed to win an apology from the tourist agency Čedok for a bus driver who called his passengers swine.<sup>117</sup>

113. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 421, l. 5; d. 426, l. 175; quote from d. 1315, l. 4.

114. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, 10.

115. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 409, l. 171; d. 491, l. 3; d. 597, l. 55; d. 504, l. 69.

116. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 504, l. 69; only the Bulgarians seemed to be grateful, noted one group leader. *Ibid.*, d. 893, l. 68.

117. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 597, ll. 124, 131; d. 407, l. 155; d. 488, ll. 4–5; d. 721, l. 30 (quote); d. 598, ll. 88–89. On Soviet-Czechoslovak tourist relations, before and after the Soviet invasion of August 1968, see Rachel Applebaum, “A Test of Friendship: Soviet-Czechoslovak Tourism and the Prague Spring,” in Gorsuch and Koenker, *The Socialist Sixties*, 213–32.

Tourist groups noted that their treatment was often inferior to that accorded other groups of socialist tourists; in some cases they attributed this to their well-known lack of spending money. A Hungarian guide “considered us to be second-class people because we wanted to shop at discount stores.” Soviet tourism officials also shared some of this disdain for the barbarian tourists, with their inappropriate clothing and primitive table manners.<sup>118</sup> And tourists from Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union fared even worse: the Bulgarian Georgi Markov recalled being told by Inturist in Leningrad in 1959 that tourists like him from other communist countries were “third-class,” of no interest, because they brought no hard currency.<sup>119</sup> Engaging in international tourism brought Soviet practices into a head-on collision with the market, and here the market won.

The combination of defensive and aggressive Soviet pride led tourists to long for familiar surroundings even while abroad. The preference for Soviet meals and folk dances marked this portable vacation identity. They felt happier singing songs around a campfire with Czech vacationers than sitting formally in a nightclub, especially when they could not afford to purchase a cocktail. They also felt better when they could watch Soviet programs on foreign television, view Soviet films in the cinema, and follow the news from Moscow on their radios and in Russian newspapers. “Our tourists from Chuvashia, Baku, and Chita are literally worn out with yearning for news from the Homeland.”<sup>120</sup> To hear a jazz band in Greece or Italy playing the Russian melody “Moscow Nights” made tourists feel not so far from home. Bulgaria emerged as a favored destination for Soviet tourists by the end of the 1960s because it seemed so familiar. The mountains reminded tourists of the North Caucasus, and their “streets and squares bore our countrymen’s names like Gagarin, Skobelev, and Lenin.” And the Bulgarians showed great respect for the Soviet people.<sup>121</sup> Again, one might question the genuineness of this Soviet patriotism, since these sentiments would definitely appeal to the trade union and Communist Party officials who read these reports. But it is unreasonable to assume that all Soviet tourists (or citizens) were secret opponents of the regime, yearning to break free. And it is a normal feature of international

118. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 893, ll. 65–66 (quote); d. 721, l. 24; d. 1115, l. 5; d. 468, ll. 51–54. See Anne E. Gorsuch, “Time Travelers: Soviet Tourists to Eastern Europe,” in Gorsuch and Koenker, *Turizm*, 221–225.

119. Georgi Markov, *The Truth That Killed*, trans. Liliana Brisby, with an introduction by Annabel Markov (London, 1983), 89.

120. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 865, ll. 37, 51; d. 407, l. 48; d. 866, ll. 66, 42 (quote); d. 716, l. 50; d. 878, l. 84. By 1976, tour groups were well supplied with Soviet sources of information, according to Aleksei Popov’s study of the Crimean tourist bureau. Perhaps this was a response to earlier requests, or an attempt to insulate Soviet tourists from uncontrolled sources of news in post-1968 Eastern Europe, or both. Popov, “Sovetskie turisty za rubezhom.”

121. *Martenovka*, 14 August 1958; “Bulgaria—Land of Open Hearts,” *Martenovka*, 28 July 1964; 30 July 1964; *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 5 June 1968; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 4 August 1976.

tourist travel that tourists seek the familiar as well as the exotic, whether it is the *Herald-Tribune* in Paris, McDonald's in Beijing, or *Pravda* in Prague.

On the other side of the coin were Soviet tourists who were equally sensitive to their lack of tourist sophistication and knowledge but who were curious about the wider world and eager to acquire tourist know-how. Many made suggestions about how to become better tourists, acknowledging that they should be better informed about local practices, prices, and customs. They asked for more guidebooks, maps, and phrase books so that they could prepare in advance for their encounters. Many expressed appreciation for the briefings on tourist etiquette that they received before and during their train journeys west.<sup>122</sup>

One of the original goals of sending Soviet citizens abroad (in the tradition of Peter the Great's journey to study Dutch shipbuilding) had been to acquire useful knowledge to employ back home. The shock workers on the 1930 *Abkhaziia* sailing had confirmed their worst fears about the inequalities of capitalism, but they also paid attention to the exemplary cleanliness at Hamburg wharves. Soviet tourists in the 1960s and 1970s, especially those in the specialized groups, kept careful notes on the production sites they visited. Their job was to compare, evaluate, and learn. Postwar Soviet tourists abroad also paid attention to the organization of daily life and reported back home about what they admired and what could be emulated. A Moscow textile worker traveling to the GDR in 1958 noted that the metro was "not as deep as ours," but she liked the way mailboxes were all arranged on the ground floor of apartment buildings and how residents cooperated in cleaning the stairs.<sup>123</sup>

The consumer culture of other socialist countries also drew admiring comments for the politeness of sales staff and the efficiency of self-service stores. Tourists to Czechoslovakia were especially impressed with the organization of commerce, the array of specialized stores, the polite service, attractive and informative shop windows, and the availability of goods. "Obviously they don't have the same typical feature of our retail trade, when they 'throw out' something nice and it quickly disappears. Shoppers know that the goods they need will be there both today and tomorrow in Brno, in Bratislava, and in other towns. Therefore they don't have to hurry to buy something, just to have, in case it suddenly vanishes." A group leader was even more candid about his encounter with retail trade in Hungary. Noting that his group had expressed embarrassment at the comparison between Soviet and Hungarian material culture, he wrote, "Of course, many of our tourists find it difficult to understand why in countries like Hungary you can buy anything you need in the stores, and we can't; why here the salespeople are so attentive and polite to the shoppers, and at home we are so often met with insulting indifference

122. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 701, l. 30; d. 716, l. 37; d. 878, l. 84; d. 1115, l. 41; d. 426, l. 203.

123. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 598, ll. 133, 141, 148; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 9 August 1958 (quote).

and rudeness. This was the only negative impression that our trip to Hungary produced among our tourists.”<sup>124</sup> Soviet tourists to capitalist countries may have experienced even greater shock at the differences between socialist and capitalist cultures, but these tourists were far fewer than those to the fraternal democratic republics of Eastern Europe, and their superior consumer cultures could be written off by pointing out all the fundamental inequalities created by capitalist excess. Just as in 1930, Soviet tourists to capitalist European countries made sure to mention slums and strikes, and they were circumspect in what they chose to praise.<sup>125</sup>

### Who Was the Post-proletarian Soviet Tourist?

The proliferation of opportunities helped to fulfill the activists’ dream of a truly mass movement of tourists. Young tourists could vacation at tourist health camps and travel by autostop; the more elderly could drive to their destinations in their own cars or float along the Volga on a tourist cruise. Active young adults could organize their own adventure tourist trips, sign up for a hiking package along the Georgian Military Highway, or take a train around the country’s capital cities.

When trade union officials talked about tourism as a mass movement, they continued to assume that the educated middle class gravitated naturally and willingly toward tourism as a vacation option but that factory workers and collective farmers required more acculturation and encouragement in order for them to participate in tourism’s horizon-expanding experience. “There was a time when tourism in our country was engaged in primarily by white-collar employees, representatives of the intelligentsia, and students,” wrote Abukov in 1983. “Among tourists one encountered few workers, and toilers from the village were practically not there at all.”<sup>126</sup> Independent tourism, in particular, had become the preserve of the intelligentsia. The connection between academics and alpinism had already been strong in the 1930s. One veteran tourist estimated that 98 percent of independent tourists and participants in tourist rallies in the 1950s came from the intelligentsia, and the connection was so strong that he no longer remembered the original name of the OPTE, which he recalled as the Association of Travel, Tourism, and Excursions (Ob’edinenie puteshestvii, turizma i ekskursii): the “proletarian tourist” had vanished.<sup>127</sup>

124. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 592, l. 73; d. 426, l. 221; d. 1323 (group leader reports, 1969), ll. 15–16; d. 1342, l. 31; “Obviously they don’t have,” d. 598, ll. 149–150; “Of course, many of our tourists,” d. 488, l. 5.

125. Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, chaps. 4–5.

126. A. Kh. Abukov, *Turizm na novym etape: sotsial’nye aspekty razvitiia turizma v SSSR* (Moscow, 1983), 72.

127. Vladimir Novikov, “Belyi list kievskoi avtorskoi pesni,” *Graffiti*, no. 2 (8) and no. 3 (9) 1997, [http://bards.ru/press/press\\_show.php?id=993&show=topic&topic=9&page=1](http://bards.ru/press/press_show.php?id=993&show=topic&topic=9&page=1).

Although comprehensive data are lacking, individual trip reports did produce statistics on the social composition of groups, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the moment when the new Party program announced boldly that imminent economic and social development would eliminate the last vestiges of class distinctions.<sup>128</sup> Moscow's 1960 tourist trains consisted predominantly of white-collar workers and students. Workers comprised 12 and 14 percent of the passengers on two trips for which we have information; students were nearly one-third of the groups on each trip. By contrast, two years later, workers comprised about 40 percent of the tourists on seven trips of itinerary number 187; professionals and intelligentsia (including students) numbered 47 percent, and white-collar employees and bureaucrats came to 16 percent of the passengers.<sup>129</sup>

These data are fragmentary, but they reinforce conclusions proffered by tourism officials. Social insurance did not subsidize tourist putevki, unlike those to rest homes and resorts. "Workers are not in a position to purchase a putevka to the south for full price; it costs 65 or 70 rubles, and then they have to pay extra for transport there," said the representative from Perm at a 1961 conference of TEU officials. Although wage differentials had diminished in the 1960s, officials still assumed that production workers' reluctance to take tourist vacations was due to price rather than preference.<sup>130</sup>

Price and its effect on the social composition of international tourists posed an even bigger concern. Scattered local reports suggest that in 1960 workers comprised between 9 and 25 percent of the tourist groups sent abroad to socialist countries, but they were very few on tours to capitalist countries.<sup>131</sup> This low number worried trade union officials, particularly because of the expectation that tourists abroad would bring back new production ideas. Officials discussed ways to improve the ratio, such as giving free foreign putevki as rewards for exemplary workers. But they acknowledged the deterrent effect of the high cost of foreign travel. On the other hand, workers constituted 60 percent of groups who traveled abroad explicitly for rest and medical treatment (a figure suspiciously close to the old targets set in the 1930s). Because these trips had a medical purpose, participants paid only 30 percent of the total cost. As travel abroad expanded and became more normal and as living standards rose, the number of workers in foreign tour groups appeared to increase. Abukov reported that over 40 percent of tourists abroad in 1977 were factory

128. Vail' and Genis, 60-e, 13; *Programma kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, 62–63.

129. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 9; d. 10; d. 31.

130. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, l. 60 (quote); Hanson, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy*, 65; Hewett, *Reforming the Soviet Economy*, 48.

131. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 379 (materials on foreign tourism, 1960); d. 374 (group leader reports, 1960), ll. 27–28, 37–38, 40–41, 82, 90–91, 114–116; d. 631, l. 16. See also Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, 82–86, on workers traveling to Eastern Europe, and 109–113 on travel to capitalist countries.



and collective farm workers, many traveling in groups from single enterprises in order to exchange production knowledge with counterparts abroad.<sup>132</sup>

There was a close connection between educational attainment and tourist participation, and the increasing share of the population that finished secondary school helped to swell the ranks of Soviet tourists. Abukov seemed satisfied to report that in 1980 workers constituted the largest group of Soviet tourists, at 28 percent, followed by engineering and technical personnel (25 percent), white-collar workers (23 percent), students (13 percent), and creative intellectuals (writers, artists, musicians, etc.) (5 percent). He reported without comment the fact that only 0.5 percent of tourists were agricultural workers.<sup>133</sup> As noted in chapter 5, workers constituted 45.3 percent of vacationers in sanatoria and rest homes in 1963 (table 5.2). If only 28 percent of tourists were workers, the sons and daughters of the proletariat remained underrepresented in Soviet tourism. The heirs of proletarian tourism turned out to be the educated middle class, the Soviet intelligentsia.

Although the expansion of tourism incorporated an ever-increasing share of the Soviet population, this expansion did not necessarily produce greater social homogenization. On the contrary, discussions about tour groups abroad note the desirability of constituting groups according to social position, since mixing workers and intellectuals was “not completely successful.” Tourists from different professions had different interests and habits and needed their own particular programs, advised more than one trip leader. The properties of the social stratification of Soviet vacationers lack satisfactory evidence, but the data from fragmentary studies suggest some contours. The social elite commanded the most desirable locations and times: high officials, creative intellectuals, and leading scientists took precedence in the south and during July and August. Manual laborers tended to vacation near home. Another study from 1985 indicated that students, intelligentsia, and engineering-technical staff were most interested in active forms of rest at tourist bases; workers preferred the more passive journey aboard tourist trains.<sup>134</sup> Travelers with tourist putevki, whether at home or abroad, were more likely to come from the educated middle classes than from the laboring classes.

Was this stratification the result of choice or economic realities? The discomfort reported from socially mixed groups on foreign tours suggests that intellectuals and workers may not have welcomed each other's company. But there may have been other sites—fishing and hunting cabins, river cruises, factory rest camps—where social distinction mattered less.<sup>135</sup> The American journalist Wright Miller commented on the absence of class distinctions he had observed by the late 1950s. There was a wide respect for a kind of egalitarianism.

132. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 375, l. 4; d. 390, l. 34; d. 422, l. 3; Abukov, *Turizm segodnia i zavtra*, 244.

133. Abukov, *Turizm na novym etape*, 72.

134. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 468, ll. 155, 166, 216; d. 491, l. 84; d. 878, l. 150; d. 865, l. 30; d. 1315, l. 55; A. Ivashchenko, “Izuchaem spros,” *Turist*, no. 8 (1985): 7.

135. Personal communication with Galina Yankovskaya, 2004.

tarian culture, he noted. "Thus the intelligentsia have less reason to feel a class superiority because of their interests and abilities. 'Specialism' is felt to be something open to almost everybody; in the lightest of contemporary comedies (Mikhalkov's *Dikari*), a diplomat and a vet, on a camping holiday by the Black Sea, take up with a police girl and a female lion-tamer, also camping, without the slightest hint that there is anything but a functional distinction in the status of any of them." The 1980 film *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* emphasizes the immateriality of class distinction in portraying the laboratory technician Vova as both the salt of the earth and the equal of the scientists with whom he works.<sup>136</sup> On a tourist outing over shashlik, the men of learning praise his "magic hands." Here we have the ideal of mass tourism, which brings all classes together without distinction of background or education.

There were, however, distinctions by gender. On the road, the post-proletarian tourist, at least on the package tours at home and to Eastern Europe, was twice as likely to be a woman as a man.<sup>137</sup> This sex imbalance in part reflected postwar demographic realities: women constituted 55 percent of the population in 1959, and as late as 1987, they still made up 53 percent.<sup>138</sup> But the share of women among tourist groups was greater than this, often two-thirds or more. A study from Kazan' in 1966 suggested that men and women chose to vacation differently: 25 percent of the women in the sample had spent their most recent holiday visiting other cities; only 10 percent of the men had. Ten percent of the women but only 1 percent of men went to the seashore. Men were more likely to go to the village (24 percent to 11 percent), to sanatoria or rest homes (16 percent to 7 percent), or to the countryside or along the Volga (14 percent to 5 percent).<sup>139</sup> Planners and officials seemed indifferent to the consequences of this imbalance in their considerations of the expansion of tourist facilities: none of the published survey data pay attention to the possibility of variable consumer demand by sex.

Needless to say, they also do not discuss tourism in terms of a consumer demand for sex. As with rest homes, tourist trips also provided opportunities for women to find themselves a man, either temporarily or as a mate. The sexual ambitions of women tourists received little comment on domestic tours, with the exception of the report on the two women who ran off with a group of Georgian men. Such behavior abroad raised concerns when women

136. Wright Miller, *Russians as People* (New York, 1961), 139. The Mikhalkov play was the source for the tourist film *Three Plus Two. Moskva slezam ne verit* (*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*), dir. Vladimir Menshov, Mosfil'm, 1980.

137. See Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, chap. 3, on the composition of tourists to Eastern European as opposed to capitalist destinations.

138. *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR za 70 let*, 379.

139. William Moskoff, *Labour and Leisure in the Soviet Union: The Conflict between Public and Private Decision-Making in a Planned Economy* (London, 1984), 126, citing G. T. Zhuravlev, "Svobodnoe vremia i kul'turnaia zhizn' rabotnikov promyshlennogo predpriiatiia," in *Sotsial'nye problemy truda i proizvodstva*, ed. G. V. Osipov and Ia. Shchepan'skii (Moscow, 1969), 388.

sought liaisons with locals: the reports of trip leaders are rife with disapproval of a woman's going off in a car with a local man or spending the night away from the hotel. But some also disapproved of traveling Soviet citizens sharing a room as if husband and wife. Anne Gorsuch notes that officials also feared the excessively consumerist drives of women tourists: "It is also possible that more women traveled to eastern Europe precisely because it was such a good place to shop." If women drew disapproval for their excessive consumerism and flagrant sexuality, male tourists were more likely to engage in heavy drinking, a double crime because they were then in no condition to police the behavior of the women.<sup>140</sup> In the 1930s, some officials believed that including women in independent tour groups would help to civilize men and curb such antisocial behavior, but women were not observed to perform the same role in the postwar discussions considered here.

In fact, the appeal for women of organized package tours was widespread across economic systems in the second half of the twentieth century. Writing of American tourists to postwar France, Harvey Levenstein notes, "For women traveling alone, [package tours] solved the vexing problem of what to do at dinner and in the evening." And the group protected them from the potential advances of lecherous men. "Braving the new and unknown territories outside, for sightseeing, lunches, hotel beds, or rest rooms, became much easier because of the reassuring familiarity of 'our bus,' with its own odors and unique little details," notes Löfgren, and this reassuring familiarity might have been more appealing and physically necessary for single women travelers than for men. Single women in West Germany opted for package tours to avoid the marginalization they faced in more traditional, upscale, and family-oriented resorts.<sup>141</sup>

On the whole, then, the stereotypical tourist in a Soviet group tour was an educated woman, and in the independent sporting tourist groups, the tourist was most likely to be an educated man. Families, as we have seen, were discouraged from vacationing together at all, and until late in the Soviet period, as the final chapter will show, there were few options available for them.

### **The Meaning of Soviet Tourism: To Create a New Socialist Person**

By the 1960s Soviet tourism had transcended its proletarian origins and now offered vacationing practices and experiences to appeal to an expanded urban and educated population. But if it was post-proletarian in composition, its advocates continued to insist that tourism in the Soviet Union reflected and shaped a distinctive set of socialist values of purpose, knowledge,

140. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 10, ll. 14–15; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1323, l. 40; d. 1315, ll. 53, 67, 43; d. 878, ll. 43, 102; Gorsuch, "Time Travelers," 221.

141. Harvey Levenstein, *We'll Always Have Paris: American Tourists in France since 1930* (Chicago, 2004), 143; Löfgren, *On Holiday*, 171; Kopper, "Breakthrough of the Package Tour in Germany."

and collectivity. Whether in small independent groups of friends or in packaged group tours by land or by sea, Soviet tourists distinguished their socialist experience from tourism elsewhere by the substantive and purposeful content of travel. Working at tourism, they gained physical, mental, and cultural benefits. Unlike purportedly idle Western tourists, Soviet tourists engaged the world, domestic and foreign, in order to improve their capacity for work and citizenship. A Soviet tourist trip brought personal growth, whether through physical training, expanding one's cultural horizons, or developing confidence in the ability to encounter new and strange situations. The tourist embarked on this journey of personal development fully cognizant of the task at hand: to be a conscious tourist meant to understand the meaning of tourism itself. Among the requirements for earning the Tourist USSR badge, candidates had to answer questions on the proletarian tourism movement and its distinctive goals.<sup>142</sup> The emphasis on purpose remained central in the tourism prescriptions of the 1960s and 1970s, coexisting uneasily with a new acknowledgment of consumer pleasure.

The physical and medical benefit of tourist travel remained a fundamental tenet of Soviet tourism. A socialist vacation, whether taken in one place at a rest home or spa or spent on the road, healed and strengthened the organism and restored the vacationer's fitness for work. While good health was a goal for every member of society and contributed to individual well-being, the right to rest never lost its intimate connection with the obligation to work. Illness was not just a personal calamity: it led to missed work days and a loss of production. The trade union secretary N.N. Romanov noted in 1962 that sick leave was taken by two million workers every day; active tourism could help to reduce this tremendous drain on the economy. One study in the early 1960s found that tourists became ill half as frequently as workers who did not engage in tourism, a fact that might be used to pry more funds out of factory managers reluctant to support local tourist groups.<sup>143</sup>

Tourism produced knowledge, and knowledge helped develop the individual and improve one's ability to contribute to the collective good. The unique value of socialist tourism, insisted its proponents, derived from the ideological and political benefits of knowledge produced in travel. A Soviet tourist traveled to new places in order to acquire knowledge of their flora and fauna, the life and achievements of the local populations, and the glorious history of events that took place there. "Rest is all very well, but tourism ought to be an active form of developing the mind of young people, fostering their feelings of patriotism and pride in their great country." Tourism broadened one's horizons and made tourists better citizens, and only purposeful

142. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 467 (excursion leaders' scripts, 1962), contains a text for the obligatory opening lecture on the tourist movement. On the badge requirements, TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6.

143. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 447, l. 117; d. 921, ll. 185–186.

tourism was worthy of the socialist label. “Correctly organized and well-conducted excursions, outings, and travels ensure active rest, strengthen and steel one’s health, develop and expand one’s worldview, cultivate courage, strength, dexterity, and endurance, and enrich a person’s spirit. In a word, they cultivate all those qualities that are necessary for the building of communism,” opined a tourist official from the Spartak sports society in 1966.<sup>144</sup>

Proper knowledge-based Soviet tourism inculcated a respect for nature and helped to expand the reach of science. At Lake Seliger, site of one of the oldest, largest, and most popular tourist bases in central Russia, scientific experts led daily training hikes to introduce campers to the botanical and aquatic features of the region. Thus instructed, the tourists would be able to better understand their surroundings when they embarked on their Tourist badge hikes. Special geological tours in Siberia and in the Urals allowed tourists to collect specimens for scientific research, just as they had in the 1930s.<sup>145</sup>

Knowledge of place also figured prominently in the goals and itineraries of Soviet tourism. Whether on a cruise ship, a tourist train, or trekking through the mountains, learning about the localities added to the tourist’s store of knowledge of country. On board the Caucasus-bound train Druzhba, tourists heard radio broadcasts (in lieu of printed guidebooks) that described the regions to be visited, giving advice about museums and exhibits to see. They further consolidated their knowledge by recording what they saw in photographs and diaries. “Completing our captivating trip on the Black Sea, whose purpose was to study our native land,” wrote a group on a 1968 cruise, “we augmented our suitcase of knowledge, gained strength and new impressions, and at the same time had a marvelous rest.” Tourism officials continued to encourage tourists to experience new regions of the country and not only the Caucasus or Crimea: all Soviet people needed to visit Siberia in order to expand their worldview, said one official from the eastern Urals city of Cheliabinsk. Residents from Central Asia would find their pride in their local landscapes complemented by viewing the beauties of the Caucasus and the Black Sea.<sup>146</sup>

Tourism produced a patriotic knowledge of country, as the Communist Party reminded citizens in its landmark 1969 decree on the reinvigoration of tourist travel. “Familiarity with monuments of history and culture, with the nature of one’s native region, with the achievements of the economy, science, and culture facilitate the inculcation in Soviet people of a love of their native land, and loyalty to the revolutionary, military, and laboring traditions of our

144. “Rest is all very well,” GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 632, l. 110; “Correctly organized,” d. 921, l. 123.

145. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 6, l. 39; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 578, l. 22; *Turistskie tropy*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1960), 222–230.

146. TsAGM, f. 28, op. 1, d. 31, l. 73; GAGS, f. 261, op. 1, d. 41, ll. 10ob., 20ob., 22, 24 (quote); GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 381, l. 25; GAGS, f. 261, op. 1, d. 1 (tourist train comment books, 1964), l. 81.

people.”<sup>147</sup> Politically themed itineraries proliferated in the 1960s, particularly toward the anniversary of Lenin’s birth. Tourists in 1968, for example, could choose tours of sites where Lenin had lived and worked around Lenin-grad and in Karelia; they could reflect on the military exploits of the Soviet people by following partisan trails in Crimea. An independent group of six cyclists from an Ivanovo meatpacking plant dedicated their 1971 vacation to retracing the route of a local division in the war: they paid their respects at war memorials and interviewed veterans along their way.<sup>148</sup>

By the 1960s the educational and patriotic goals of tourism had come to outweigh the health benefits of physical tourism. Tourists could develop their patriotic knowledge in any number of ways, whether sitting on a train or paddling a kayak. Theorists had formerly insisted that “the essence of tourism was substantive, many-sided, recuperative rest while moving from place to place.” The new essence of tourism, insisted the editor of *Turist* in 1967, was to create the Soviet person, fostering the highest moral qualities. He disavowed the old proletarian tourism attitude that a tourist was only someone who went on a complex long-distance trip in order to enhance his qualifications as a master of sport in tourism. “Those who travel from Moscow to Ul’ianovsk [Lenin’s birthplace] or to Brest in order to see with their own eyes the places dear to the heart of every person, they consider them to be pigeons or excursionists, but not tourists.” This was wrong, concurred another official: travel to see was the goal, and it did not matter whether it took the form of independent adventure tourism by kayak, bicycle, or mountaineering; group travel through the mountains; twenty-day excursions by train; or weekend outings with or without rucksack.<sup>149</sup> It was content that mattered, not the means of conveyance. But Soviet tourism was also distinguished by practices that emphasized collective and social ways of seeing. When the post-proletarian tourist ventured away from home, the journey was still best undertaken in groups.

The extreme importance of the collective remained one of the most enduring features of Soviet tourism. The tourist group brought strangers together to become friends and conquer obstacles together. “Tourism is a wonderful world of rest, interesting new people, new friendships. It’s simply marvelous when people of different professions, proclivities, cultural levels and characters come together in a collective,” wrote the engineer Nikolai Petrov in response to the *Trud* survey of 1966. The tourist group also provided a mechanism for mutual inculcation of norms and discipline, an especially

147. *Trud*, 26 June 1969 (quote); GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1746, ll. 24–25. A Siberian Kom-somol official had spoken of the need for patriotic itineraries “now more than ever” in 1962. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 447, l. 88.

148. *Turistskie marshruty na 1968 god*; GARF, f. 9559, op. 1, d. 1448 (report on cycling tourist trip, 1971).

149. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1061 (central tourism council plenum, June 1967), ll. 163–165 (quote); TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 6, l. 16.



important feature of tourist trips abroad, as we have seen. And it offered practical advantages in solving logistical challenges of tourist travel: it was far easier for tourist bases and transport agencies to plan for and manage groups of twenty-five or thirty or even four than to account for every one of the millions of Soviet tourists as individuals. The foreign tourist agency, Inturist, did not permit foreign travelers to journey as individuals until 1963.<sup>150</sup> Even in 1989, during my family's Inturist excursion to Uzbekistan, we were known as the "Group of Four from the USA."

Soviet tourism continued into the 1960s and 1970s to compare unfavorably to the health spa as a vacation option, even as opportunities for both stationary rest and active travel expanded in the years after the Twentieth Party Congress. Tourism lagged behind health spas in the quality of its facilities, and since it did not qualify for social insurance subsidies, a touring vacation was more expensive than a stay at a rest home or health spa. But as the living standards of Soviet urban citizens began to rise in the 1960s and opportunities arose to participate in a more developed tourist industry abroad, the growing Soviet educated class increasingly sought vacations that offered active knowledge production, varied scenery, and new experiences. Tourism, with its multiple modes of transportation and infinite number of destinations, offered new possibilities for Soviet citizens to encounter their country and experience other cultures abroad. Tourist vacations required less state expenditure than health resorts because there was no need to provide expensive medical services. By 1975 the number of Soviet citizens vacationing in tourist facilities exceeded the number in health institutions for the first time, and given the numbers of additional tourists traveling on their own and traveling abroad, one can say that in the seventh decade of the Soviet experiment, tourism had finally become a mass phenomenon.

As vacations became more comfortable, whether in new hotel-like tourist bases, on cruise ships, or on trains, Soviet tourism remained purposeful. Tourists abroad were expected to bring back new ideas and approaches to their work responsibilities, whereas tourists at home were meant to develop a deeper appreciation of their national past and socialist achievements. Soviet tourism remained a collective endeavor, in which travel did not just provide new impressions and expand one's base of knowledge but positively reinforced group bonds and taught the virtues and joys of collaborative encounters with new surroundings.

As Soviet tourism expanded in absolute numbers, it also diversified in the types of travel from which Soviet vacationers could choose. Though not everyone could manage to receive a place on a group tour abroad, opportunities to visit Soviet cities and distant republics offered an increasing range of travel alternatives. The expansion of tourism possibilities paralleled the absolute growth of an educated professional and technical class. No longer an

150. *Trud*, 20 September 1966; Salmon, "To the Land of the Future," 228–229.

elite, the Soviet intelligentsia made tourism its own. Those virtues that had been ascribed to *proletarian* tourism in the 1920s—purpose, health, knowledge, self-actualization—were now embraced by a post-proletarian mass of intellectuals, the new Soviet ruling class. Distinctions would remain in the allocation of health spa vacations, elite Communist Party institutions would continue to maintain their own closed networks of rest homes and sanatoria, and foreign travel remained highly rationed by merit and reliability as well as by price, but domestic tourist travel had become widely available to those with money and not just connections. As living standards rose, the new Soviet intellectual classes were amassing disposable income, which many chose to spend on tourist travel.

The expansion of tourist demand and facilities by the 1970s led to new economic challenges. Soviet tourism had begun as a social movement in the service of production in the 1920s, but by the 1960s tourism had become an object of consumer demand and a complex economic enterprise rather than a social movement. Chapter 7 evaluates this transformation from movement to industry in the 1970s and later and shows the growing convergence between tourism and health spa vacations as twin entitlements of the Soviet citizens' right to rest.

## chapter seven

# The Modernization of Soviet Tourism

In 1978 the trade union chief Aleksei Abukov described the three stages of Soviet tourism. The first stage, from the 1920s to 1936, saw the birth and development of a voluntary movement of enthusiasts. As a movement, he wrote, it did not correspond to the growing expectations of Soviet citizens for purposeful and pleasurable leisure travel, and so the responsibility for tourism passed in 1936 to the Central Trade Union Council. This organization understood tourism as a social benefit, expanding tourist opportunities in the 1950s and 1960s, until the demand for destinations and the complexity of services outstripped the trade unions' ability to provide them. The modern era of Soviet tourism began in 1969, with the government decree on the "further development" of Soviet tourism: only now, wrote Abukov, had tourism become an "industry," a full-fledged sector of the developed socialist economy.<sup>1</sup>

As Soviet tourism evolved from a social movement to a welfare benefit to an industry, its growth and transformation in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the narrowing of the differences between the classic spa vacation and the modern tourist vacation. Exposure to new models of tourism abroad and rising standards of living produced a newly discriminating consumer of vacation experience who now expected to combine the comfort of a health resort with recreation, culture, and choice. Activists no longer needed to train people to be tourists: the mobile, literate, and predominantly urban Soviet individual had acquired this knowledge in the process of traveling domestically and abroad. Having privileged the self-actualizing function of tourism since its very beginning in the 1920s, the Soviet regime could now acknowledge the success of that project: the Soviet consumer's ability to make his or her own choices. Trade union tourism officials recognized that under developed socialism, their primary responsibility had shifted from promotion of tourism as a social good to aligning the production of vacation opportunities to correspond to the demands of their consumers. As Abukov noted in addressing his officials in 1969, "We need to remember that the tourist does

1. Abukov, *Turizm segodnia i zavtra*, 16–38.

not exist for us, but we exist for the tourist.”<sup>2</sup> This conceptual shift led to the final transformation of tourism from a social movement to a socialist leisure industry and to its ultimate convergence with rest as the new model Soviet vacation.

The Communist Party Central Committee had authorized foreign travel in 1955 with the partial goal of expanding the domestic stock of knowledge about production methods and professional practices abroad.<sup>3</sup> In the process, these exchanges also provided Soviet tourists with new expectations about the practice of tourism itself. Officials acknowledged in 1956 that tourists coming from abroad would require better conditions than those currently prevailing at Soviet tourist bases.<sup>4</sup> Soviet travelers found that socialist bloc tourist hotels with double rooms put domestic dormitory or tent facilities to shame; they noted that other countries’ tourists were often treated better than they were and wondered why they were denied similar levels of comfort and dignity.<sup>5</sup> These comparisons gradually translated into higher expectations for Soviet tourism at home.

Foreign travel offered a different model of tourism, where one could travel and see sights but still rest each evening in a comfortable hotel. “We need to move away from the tourist base as a stationary point to tourist travels around the country. We need to organize such trips, foreign tourist practice teaches us this,” said a TEU official as early as 1956.<sup>6</sup> In recounting their own travels abroad, Soviet tourists emphasized the variety, multiplicity, and novelty of the sights they viewed as well as the organization of services with meals, transfers, entertainment, and hotels. They learned to evaluate the qualities of their guides and to become more discriminating in their spending.<sup>7</sup> They learned to bring along cameras that they might sell to stretch their spending money, and they learned to shop for souvenirs and for items unavailable at home.<sup>8</sup> They praised the organization of Bulgaria’s “twenty-first-century” resorts, with contemporary architecture, souvenir shops, a variety of amusements, and themed restaurants along the beach such as Robinzon, where the wait staff dressed like pirates. They noticed that foreign socialists often

2. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1272 (central tourism council plenum, July 1969), l. 33.

3. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 374 (foreign tourist group leader reports, 1960). Our task, said one official, “is that tourism take place not for its own sake, but so that comrades, along with rest, bring back some value for their enterprises.” GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 375 (foreign tourists’ conference, September 1960), l. 15.

4. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 352 (tourism officials’ conferences, 1957).

5. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 491 (group leader reports, 1962), l. 162; d. 597 (group leader reports, 1963), l. 83.

6. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 318 (tourism officials’ conference, 1956), l. 11.

7. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 10 August 1962; *Martenovka*, 11 September, 20 September 1956; *Martenovka*, 9, 14, 16, 30 August, 2 September 1958. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 318, l. 17; d. 632 (central tourism council plenum, December 1964), l. 183; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 409 (group leader reports, 1961), l. 32.

8. Many trip reports acknowledged this practice; see Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World*, and A. D. Popov, “Tenevyie storony zarubezhnogo (vyezdnogo) turizma v Sovetskom Soiuzie (1960–1980 gg.),” *Kul’tura narodov Prichernomorya*, no. 152 (Simferopol, 2009), 151–155.

vacationed as families in Bulgarian and Romanian health resorts and wondered why they could not do this at home.<sup>9</sup>

The international culture of tourism that taught these lessons was also evolving at this time. Scholars generally acknowledge that mass tourism in Europe did not really take off until the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s. In West Germany the watershed came in 1958, when the number of its citizens traveling abroad exceeded the number of foreign tourists arriving. Thanks to the expansion of automobile ownership, nearly one-third of West Germans took a vacation away from home by the end of the 1950s. By the late 1970s, 41.3 million West Germans, two-thirds of its population, had traveled outside the country, and in smaller countries like Austria, Netherlands, and Belgium, the proportion of international travelers approached 100 percent. In France the transition to mass tourism occurred over several decades in the mid-twentieth century: in the 1930s, 5 to 10 percent of French people took vacations, a number that reached 60 percent by the 1980s. International receipts from tourism increased 47.6 times between 1950 and 1984. In the USSR, by 1980 40 million people took their holidays in organized vacation places, with 22.5 million staying in tourist bases (see table 6.1 in the previous chapter). If we accept the economists' estimates that unorganized vacationers exceeded the 17.5 million staying at spas and rest homes by a factor of ten, the total number of domestic vacationers reached approximately 188 million. In addition, 4.3 million tourists traveled abroad in 1979. The Soviet population had been measured in 1979 at 262.4 million: these figures suggest, then, that in 1980, as many as 80 percent of Soviet citizens had taken a vacation away from home. If we accept a more conservative estimate of unorganized travelers at four times the number of official stays, the total comes to 114.3 million vacationers, or 43.6 percent of the population. If a vacationing population of at least 30 percent of a society's adult population signifies a "mass tourist society," then Soviet leisure travel had assumed a mass character in world terms by the end of the 1970s.<sup>10</sup>

Even if these figures are undoubtedly inflated by double counting, faulty estimates, and other bureaucratic sleights of hand, the sheer growth in the scale of Soviet tourism is undeniable, and it paralleled the growth of tourism and vacations in the capitalist West. The introduction of passenger jets radically transformed the economics of international tourism, making long-distance vacations accessible to new strata of the population. The Soviets' TU-104, a twin-engine jet, entered commercial air service in 1956. The Boeing 707 made its appearance in 1959 and launched a new era of transatlantic

9. *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 23 August 1974; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 866 (group leader reports, 1965), l. 18; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 592 (group leader reports, 1963), l. 22; *Trud*, 25 October 1975.

10. Koshar, *German Travel Cultures*, 172–175; Donald E. Lundberg and Carolyn B. Lundberg, *International Travel and Tourism* (New York, 1985), 10; Furlough, "Making Mass Vacations"; Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 47; *Turist*, no. 2 (1981): 23; Kopper, "Breakthrough of the Package Tour in Germany."

mobility. The inexpensive accessibility of sunny coastal resorts on the Mediterranean doomed the old British seaside resorts, whose decline had begun with the emergence of passenger jets. Capital investment in resort complexes along the Mediterranean coast soared to attract these newly mobile budget tourists. In France, a centrally planned complex at La Grande Motte, launched in 1968, aspired to provide both an affordable tourist destination for all French people and an economic stimulus for the underdeveloped region of Languedoc.<sup>11</sup> It is significant that the focus of postwar Soviet tourist facility expansion was the consumer rather than local economic development.

The rising expectations for comfort and service of the mass tourist society now prompted tourism authorities to transform their own models. Beginning in the 1960s, tourist bases replaced their stationary tents with permanent structures, both small prefabricated cabins and comfortable hotels in the most popular “zones of rest.” The tourist hotel, once thought to be necessary only in cities, now arrived at the seashore. Plans called for the development of new zones of tourism and active rest, with facilities for downhill skiing and sailing. The zones would offer roads, comfortable hotels, pensions, sporting-tourism bases, motels, restaurants, cable cars, and gondolas. By 1967 chairman Abukov boasted that buildings had replaced 80 percent of tourist base tents. The expansion of tourist trains and cruise ships also responded explicitly to consumers’ demands for comfort, mobility, and service.<sup>12</sup>

Trade union officials now realized that the existing structure of the tourism organization could not serve these changing demands. The voluntary tourism councils that brought together factory committees, sports societies, tourist clubs, and Komsomol organizations were ill equipped to manage a million-ruble business. As self-financing enterprises, the tourist authorities had funded all their operations from the revenue earned from the sales of putevki. After 1969 direct state expenditures augmented these funds, which in turn generated more revenue. By 1974 the tourist authority was bringing in eighty-four million rubles from sale of putevki, a volume too large for factory committees to handle as part of their basket of social services, said one official in 1974. Tourism had become a “multi-faceted economic system,” said another official, incorporating tourist bases, hotels, restaurants, and souvenir

11. Thomas Kaiserfeld, “From Sightseeing to Sunbathing: Changing Traditions in Swedish Package Tours; from Edification by Bus to Relaxation by Airplane in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Journal of Tourism History* 2, no. 3 (2010): 149–163; *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Tu-104,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev\\_Tu-104](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tupolev_Tu-104); *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Boeing 707,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing\\_707](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_707); Urry, *Tourist Gaze*, 33–38; Ellen Furlough and Rosemary Wakeman, “La Grande Motte: Regional Development, Tourism, and the State,” in Baranowski and Furlough, *Being Elsewhere*, 348–372.

12. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d 750 (central tourism council plenum, May 1965), ll. 51–52; d. 1061 (central tourism council plenum, June 1967), ll. 78–82, 19; d. 631 (central tourism council plenum, April 1964), ll. 56–57; *Trud*, 14 January 1964; 27 November 1964; 21 May 1970.



shops; it arranged services like hairdressers, cinemas, banks, and post offices; it organized itineraries on trains, boats, and planes; it carried out planning, construction, supply, and ideological work.<sup>13</sup> With the 1969 decision to inject state funds into the expansion of tourism facilities, tourism officials began increasingly to speak in the language of “industry.”<sup>14</sup>

Industry required expert organization. Advocates of market-based principles for the tourism industry began in the 1970s to emphasize the importance of keeping down costs and reducing waste, a staple of the “cost-accounting” element of the planned economy. Using tourist trains as hotels, for example, diverted rolling stock that was better suited to moving passengers, said a transport official in 1969.<sup>15</sup> Proposals to adopt variable pricing also emerged, such as charging differential prices for summer and winter holidays to balance demand and allow for more rational use of facilities. One official also urged the adoption of the “Western practice” of charging higher rates for rooms with ocean views. A cooperative society, Rest, arose as early as 1964 to build vacation housing on a time-share basis: share holders could vacation in any of the cooperative’s properties, from the Black Sea to the Baltic.<sup>16</sup> Such proposals reflected the goals of the economic reformers who accompanied Brezhnev into power after 1964; they also tacitly acknowledged the ability of Soviet consumers to choose how to spend their vacation rubles, and they were embedded in the usual discussions about the social and ideological purpose of travel. It would have been unthinkable to suggest that tinkering with price mechanisms might create a class system in vacationing. The goal remained to ensure the right to rest to every citizen but to use pricing as a way to encourage rational utilization of public services.

A modern tourism industry required expert planning and professional training. Here the center lagged behind local initiative. The Abkhaziiia tourism authority opened the first scientific institute for tourism planning in 1964, with a staff that included historians, art specialists, ethnographers, agronomists, and physicians. In addition to research and publication on economic problems of tourism, the institute designed new itineraries in its region, developed original souvenirs based on local themes, and planned for the construction of new tourist complexes. In the mid-1960s journalists began to call for the professionalization of tour guides and excursion leaders. By the

13. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1910 (tourism officials’ conference, December 1974), ll. 55, 63; V. Krivosheev, “*Ekonomika turizma*,” *Voprosy ekonomiki*, no. 4 (1965): 136–141.

14. *Trud*, 21 May 1970; Azar, *Otdykh i Ekonomika*; Georgii Bal’dysh, “Priglasenie k puteshestviu,” *LG*, 20 February 1965, 1–2; Vladimir Gavrilenko, “A esli vsem v meste?” *LG*, 28 April 1966: 2; Viznor Pachula, “Muza stranstvii,” *LG*, 10 September 1966, 1; “Vozvraschchaia’s k napechatnomu. Eshche raz o turizme,” *LG*, 3 December 1966, 2; 8 February 1967, 12. As late as 1981, V.M. Krivosheev, a longtime advocate of making tourism an industry, continued his campaign. “Turizm: stanovlenie otrasli,” *Trud*, 5 September 1981.

15. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1272, ll. 21, 41, 234.

16. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 2077 (central tourism council meeting, April 1975), ll. 57–58; Azar, *Ekonomika*, 139–140. Krivosheev had proposed charging lower prices for hotels on urban outskirts back in 1965. “*Ekonomika turizma*,” 139; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 631, l. 204.

1970s an all-union scientific research laboratory for tourism and excursions provided professional expertise, conducting its own surveys and advising the tourism central council. Responding to demands for skilled service and management personnel, the Higher School of the Central Trade Union Council opened a department of tourism in 1973 and graduated its first class in 1977. In 1982 training programs all over the country were consolidated into a single tourism training institute, offering instruction to eighteen thousand paid and volunteer tourism instructors, guides, and managers.<sup>17</sup>

Officials acknowledged that modern marketing methods could help to expand the appeal of Soviet tourism by better informing the public about its educational and social benefits. Tourism councils had placed advertisements in central newspapers in the 1960s, listing available itineraries for the coming year; posters highlighted visually the appeal of a tourist vacation. One of these featured a photograph of Leningrad's Bronze Horseman statue and the slogan "Tourism: Rich Impressions."<sup>18</sup> Marketing surveys also began in the 1960s, as noted earlier, with public polls in central newspapers and scientific polling carried out by *Komsomol'skaia pravda's* survey research department and by the Plekhanov Economics Institute.<sup>19</sup> In 1969 the tourism council created its own publicity bureau, *Turist*, which would place advertisements, design souvenirs and putevki, and furnish guidebook copy to local tourism organizations.<sup>20</sup>

As the centerpiece of the new tourism publicity effort came the launch of a monthly magazine, *Turist*, the long-awaited successor to *On Land and On Sea*. Activists had keenly felt the absence of such a publication, lamenting the fact that only the Soviet Union and Luxemburg lacked one.<sup>21</sup> Finally, in 1966 the central TEU was able to allocate sufficient funds to begin publication. For partisans of physical tourism, the magazine offered articles on interesting destinations and provided instruction on tourist skills such as orienteering and storm-proofing tents. *Turist* also used its full-page color photos and feature articles to entice potential travelers to sign up for exotic itineraries to distant parts of the Soviet Union. Judging by comments from officials and readers, the new magazine never achieved the popularity of its predecessor. With a planned circulation of two hundred thousand, subscriptions reached eighty-two thousand in 1967, but most tourists buying package tours had never heard of it, and independent tourism activists complained that it catered too much to these very pajama tourists. *Turist* reached its peak

17. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 632, ll. 92–97; Tat'iana Glushkova, "Iskusstvo ne bylo, byl inventar'," *LG*, 20 November 1968, 10; Abukov, *Turizm segodnia i zavtra*, 10, 118; *Trud*, 21 May 1968; 21 May 1970; 3 December 1976; 14 January 1982.

18. *Trud*, 24 January 1965; 24 April 1965.

19. Grushin, *Chetyre zhizni*; *Trud*, 10 July 1966; Azar, *Otdykh*, 4; Azar, *Ekonomiki*, 5.

20. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1272, l. 40.

21. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 750, l. 160; TsAGM, f. 28, op. 3, d. 2 (Moscow tourism council plenums, April, September 1962), l. 67; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 447 (central tourism council plenum, September 1962), l. 140; d. 578 (tourism officials' conference, April 1963), l. 50; d. 631, l. 155.

in distribution in 1972, with just over two hundred thousand copies printed; by 1984 this number had fallen to eighty-one thousand.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, prospective Soviet tourists could tap into many other sources of information about vacation planning, from word of mouth to the tourist clubs to regular features in all the daily newspapers and periodicals. For example, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, the mouthpiece of the urban intelligentsia, published numerous travelogues, editorials, and survey research on tourism and vacations in the 1960s and beyond.

### Convergence: Consuming the Soviet Vacation

Soviet tourism by the 1970s had assumed multiple forms: domestic and international, soft and hard. Millions of weekend tourists continued to stream out of the cities, carrying their rucksacks and seeking respite in nature. But increasingly, they expected a vacation experience that would combine a high level of comfort with the stimulation of excursions, activities, and sightseeing. At the same time, as we have seen in chapter 5, the medical regimen of the spa vacation had yielded to more varied practices of amusement, recreation, sea air and sun, good food, and new impressions. Tourists now expected the same level of comfort and ease for their tourist ruble as had previously been provided to sojourners in health resorts, and the state budget now reflected tourism's appeal. Spending on tourism services rose from 260 million rubles in 1970 to 1 billion rubles in 1975; the number of tourists served on package tours more than tripled in those five years.<sup>23</sup> In 1975, for the first time, the trade union newspaper *Trud* devoted more coverage to tourism than to kurort vacations.<sup>24</sup> Photographs of new *tourist* hotels in far-flung places as well as popular vacation areas now appeared alongside images of comparably modern multistory sanatoria buildings. Tourism officials spoke in terms of "tourist complexes," which offered lodging, excursions, recreation, and cultural offerings. "The concepts of rest and tourism have of late increasingly blended together," said a construction official in 1975.<sup>25</sup>

Testimony from tourists and discussions by officials now emphasized the expectation that a tourist vacation would offer the same level of amenities as a stay in a spa or a rest home, minus the medicine. Reflecting on their trips

22. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 921 (central tourism council plenum, March 1966), ll. 36–37; d. 1061, ll. 161–69. *On Land and On Sea* printed seventy-five thousand copies an issue at its peak in 1931; its last issue in June 1941 came out in an edition of forty-five thousand.

23. Abukov, *Turizm na novom etape*, 27; *Trud*, 14 September 1975.

24. As shown by a count of articles from 1957 to 1982. For example, in 1960 there were forty-two articles on health places and twenty-two on tourism; in 1974, seventeen and fifteen, respectively; and in 1975, sixteen articles on spas and rest homes and sixty-two on tourism. "Tourism" now had its own weekly column.

25. *Trud*, 6 October 1965; 29 November 1969; 6 January 1970; 21 February 1970; 22 January 1976; cf. a new sanatorium in Crimea, *Trud*, 9 July 1975; "Dvoret ili palatka?" *Turist*, no. 10 (1975): 13–14.



View of the tourist base complex Horizon, in Alushta, Crimea, 1973. Photograph by Denisov. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 0341214. Used with permission of the archive.

organized by the Sochi tourist base in 1965, dozens of comments from “we tourists” praised the attentive and caring service, good food, and friendliness of the staff. They also pointed out cases in which comfort was absent. Vacationers with health resort or rest home *putevki* expressed identical sentiments. Every year, said one official in 1963, tourist demands increased: they wanted their tourist base rooms to be neat and cozy, offering mirrors, curtains, and hot water in their rooms, and they expected to find hairdressers and other services on the premises. Tourists expected comfort, repeated a Sochi official: why should someone pay sixty rubles for a bed in a tent while for the same sixty rubles, another tourist received a “modern room” in the Sokol tourist base?<sup>26</sup>

Tourist cruises most closely combined the features of rest and tourism, and they were highly prized by travelers of a certain age, who no longer sought the romance of the open road. “Setting off for a vacation with a tourist *putevka* on the *Rossiiia*, I had two goals,” wrote a village schoolteacher in

26. “Modern room,” GAGS, f. 261, op. 1, d. 1 (tourist train comment books, 1964), l. 81; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 525 (central tourism council plenum, April 1963), ll. 38–39; d. 784 (regional tourism council meetings, 1965), l. 144.



Sochi tourist base Sokol under construction in 1971. *Turist*, no. 9 (1971), inside front cover.

the ship's comment book in 1970, "to take medical treatment in the sea air and the sea, and to have a closer acquaintance with a beautiful part of our native land, the Black Sea shore. Of course, I was worried: would this be good for tourists whose health was not the best? My worries quickly passed, we were met and treated as if we were at home." "We restored our health and rested very well," wrote another, echoing the familiar lines of the health spa patient. Elsewhere, tourist base directors sought to allay the fears of middle-aged tourists, who worried that their tourist trip might prove too strenuous. Tourist bases too could provide a quiet and comfortable stay, with dominoes during the day and movies at night.<sup>27</sup>

In responding to these expectations, officials now sought to bring tourist base standards to the level of those for health resorts. An architectural engineer explained a new construction plan in which buildings could be used interchangeably as rest bases or tourist bases. These five-story structures would be built in two sizes, one with 250 beds, another with 500; each room would have two to three beds and come with a private bath. By 1975, officials were promising tourism conditions to suit every vacationer. "On every itinerary, in every tourist base we must create conditions of rest that will satisfy the most varied tastes, to address the highest demands. When buying a putevka

27. "Setting off," GAGS, f. 261, op. 1, d. 91 (Black Sea cruise comment books, 1969–1970), l. 77ob.; "We restored our health," d. 167 (materials on ocean cruises, 1971), l. 39; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1272, l. 202.



for a tourist trip, a working person should have full confidence in the fact that they will be guaranteed outstanding organization and will not have to complain, that they can trust their vacation to the tourism staff.” At the Black Sea, confirmed another official, tourists wanted high-rise hotels with all the amenities. Sure enough, the 1978 edition of *Tourist Travels around the USSR* for the Caucasus and its Black Sea coast opened with ten tours, each consisting of a single seaside city. Tour number 32, Sochi, took pride of place, described in words that evoked the luxury of the idyllic health resort: “Tourists staying in Sochi will live in the tourist base Sokol, on a verdant street in the center of town, not far from the city beach. They will lodge in sturdy buildings or in cozy summer cottages, and at their disposal will be sports fields and dance floors, library, a concert hall and outdoor cinema, and a bar. For twenty days here tourists will rest well and take a series of excursions.” Sochi itself became the chief tourist attraction, not only its “favorable climatic factors” but the nearby Matsesta springs, whose waters could be used to treat a variety of ailments. If they wished, tourists could also take a two-to-five-day “uncomplicated but interesting” hike up the Sochi River gorge.<sup>28</sup> Color photos featured shining white coastal hotels, children playing on sand beaches, pristine mountain lakes, ancient ruins, snow-capped peaks, and skiers on chair lifts high above the slopes.

Foreign tourist vacations also increasingly combined sightseeing and rest, and for some travelers, resting elsewhere proved just as attractive as foreign sights. The 1960s saw a growth in trips abroad that combined sightseeing with longer-term stays in resorts or rest homes, “to repair their health.” Soviet groups took cures at the historic Czechoslovak spas of Mariánské Lázně and Karlovy Vary; they mingled with vacationers from other socialist countries at rest homes on Hungary’s Lake Balaton; and they increasingly populated the newly constructed Black Sea resort complexes in Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>29</sup> Bulgaria quickly earned a reputation as a health vacation destination superior even to Crimea or the Caucasus Black Sea. An engineer from the Hammer and Sickle factory in Moscow confessed to trepidation on the eve of his twenty-day rest home stay in Bulgaria in 1960, but the trip surpassed his expectations, partly because of the attractions he visited and also the friendly reception by the locals. “But most of all we were astounded how our

28. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 751 (central tourism council plenum, October 1965), ll. 46–47; “On every itinerary,” d. 2077, l. 185; *Trud*, 16 September 1976; “Tourists staying in Sochi,” S. Lupandin and V. Peunov, *Turistskie puteshestviia po SSSR* (Moscow, 1978), 11–14.

29. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1315 (group leader reports, 1969), l. 43; d. 865 (group leader reports, 1965), ll. 35, 61, 3–4, 50–52; d. 390 (tourism seminar-conference, March 1961), l. 43; *Martenovka*, 22 May 1956; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 25 July 1962; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1115 (group leader reports, 1967), ll. 17, 28–29, 36–41, 46, 54–55, 66, 76–78; d. 699 (group leader reports, 1964), ll. 75–76, 81, 92, 102, 110; d. 488 (group leader reports, 1962), ll. 42–43; d. 426 (group leader reports, 1961), ll. 181–184; d. 878 (group leader reports, 1965), ll. 82–84; *Znamia trekhgorki*, 27 June 1962; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1342 (group leader reports, 1969), ll. 1–2, 13, 21, 34; *Trud*, 5 September 1957.





Tourist guide conducting a bus excursion. *Turist*, no. 10 (1972): 6.

Bulgarian comrades had built, in a region that three years before had been forest and desert, a first-class European resort.”<sup>30</sup> Other tourists, evidently, had been attracted only to the idea of the “first-class European resort.” Some members of a group that stayed in the coastal Bulgarian city of Varna had given up their putevki to Soviet spas in order to vacation at the renowned Golden Sands resort in Bulgaria, and they were upset when they received accommodation in the city, not on the beach. Another guest at Golden Sands refused to participate in any touristic activities: she had come to Bulgaria to

30. *Martenovka*, 21 July 1960 (quote); see also *Skorokhodovskii rabochii*, 16 July 1974, on Bulgaria’s “twenty-first-century” resorts. The Bulgarian Georgi Markov, on the other hand, blamed the ruin of the pristine landscape on Khrushchev’s caprice in calling for tourism development. *The Truth That Killed*, 92.

rest, she insisted.<sup>31</sup> This foreign resort travel helped to validate the notion that rest and tourism need not be separate experiences: one could claim the tourist label even if the travel destination was the beach.

The ultimate convergence between tourism and spa vacations can be seen in the acknowledgment of the popularity of family tourist vacations and the expansion of facilities for parents and children to travel together. As chapter 5 has shown, kurort officials objected to serving families. The movement to include children on mobile tourist itineraries found even more resistance because they were felt to be unable to handle the rigors of a hiking or boating trip. As tourism and rest began to converge at the end of the 1960s, the need to create conditions for family tourism vacations finally received support in the 1969 decision to expand the scope of tourism facilities. Tourism officials received instructions to accept children over the age of twelve on designated itineraries, at the same price as adults, with the added stipulation that enterprises and trade unions should subsidize 50 percent of the price. Yet well into the 1970s, despite official instructions from above, tourist administrators would still lament that “it was time” to resolve the question of family tourism, to build new bases that would adapt to the needs of children. The number of bases and itineraries taking children had expanded by 1974, with 300,000 parents and children traveling on all-union routes, and children over twelve were now permitted on all train and boat trips. But in the same year, a total of 13,218,000 travelers used tourist base facilities. Moreover, the pricing structure for tourist putevki continued to discriminate against the family vacation. The head of the Ukraine tourism council described the case in Yalta in which an “autotourist” arrived at the base, registered his documents, and received his key. Only then did he open his trunk, and “out popped two children, hidden there during the registration process.”<sup>32</sup>

Regardless of the expense, however, Soviet parents increasingly wanted to “take the whole family on vacation,” as the 1957 poster had exhorted long before official policy caught up (see chapter 6). The Krasnodar regional tourist authority, whose mandate included both Sochi and the pioneer camp–wild tourist complex at Anapa, opened the doors of eleven pansions and fourteen tourist bases to families in 1975 as “an experiment.” Contrary to fears that children would spoil the vacations of adults, the study found that all age groups coexisted nicely as long as they were given the proper allocation of space. In 1981, eleven tourist bases and hotels from Abkhaziiia to Minsk “experimentally” offered spaces for parents and children as young as five years old. Opening tourist bases to families could even improve the moral climate, argued the chairman of the Vladimir oblast tourism council. The older pattern of parents vacationing individually and the children spending summers

31. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 491, l. 106; d. 421 (group leader reports, 1961), l. 20.

32. *Trud*, 15 March 1969; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1910, l. 316; d. 2077 (central tourism council plenum, April 1975), ll. 20, 57; *Trud*, 4 August 1973; *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1974 godu* (Moscow, 1975), 617.



Family camping at the Novo-Afonskoi tourist base, Abkhazii, Georgian SSR, 1971. Photograph by M. Al'pert. RGAKFD g. Krasnogorsk, no. 1–1650tsv. Used with permission of the archive.

at pioneer camps had yielded by the 1980s to the nuclear family vacation. A Krasnodar survey reported in 1985 that 80 percent of the tourists at their bases favored the further expansion of family tourism, and only 9 percent preferred to send their children to pioneer camps. It is difficult to disentangle the factors behind this preference without further exploration of the pioneer camp itself. Catriona Kelly has suggested that the political content of these camps had become muted by the 1960s, while the physical facilities remained primitive.<sup>33</sup> So the strong preference for family vacations by the 1970s suggests not a rejection of ideology, which had already dissipated, but the primacy of the Soviet family unit as an agent of consumption, pleasure, and discovery. In this respect, too, Soviet tourism had converged with Soviet spas and with tourism in the rest of the developed world.

33. *Trud*, 25 October 1975; 13 February 1981; *Turist*, no. 7 (1981): 20–21; A. Ivashchenko, "Izuchaem spros," *Turist*, no. 8 (1985): 6; Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991* (New Haven, CT, 2007), 556–560.

### Divergence: The Message Loses Focus

As the practice of Soviet tourism and vacations matured in the 1960s and 1970s and reached new millions of participants, tourists and vacationers began to demonstrate more distinctive and varied preferences about their vacation choices. Purpose remained important, but tourists interpreted their goals in multiple ways. The 1969 decree had stipulated that tourist routes would provide Soviet travelers with experiences that would enhance their “love of their native land, and loyalty.”<sup>34</sup> Even as an industry, Soviet tourism would retain the purpose of its original creation.

As tourism expanded, it became more difficult to contain the ideological meanings that the regime meant to instill. Although historical destinations proliferated on tourist itineraries, history itself had become a source of conflict and ambiguity in the aftermath of the Twentieth Party Congress. Professional historians had begun to question the shibboleths and certainties of Stalin-era interpretations, and tourists too were increasingly able to choose their own destinations and select their own narratives.<sup>35</sup> Celebrating the positive achievements of the Soviet past, Abukov pointed out in 1973, would fulfill the intention of the 1969 directive on patriotic tourism. But the Soviet past was becoming contested. A revival in interest about ancient Russia, sponsored by newly formed societies for the protection of ancient monuments, threatened to undermine the Communist Party’s antireligious ethos. Under the guise of “historical culture,” worried officials, some tour guides were including too many monasteries, churches, and mosques on their excursions and not enough monuments to Soviet culture. As an example of historical tourism losing its socialist message, tourists in the Siberian city of Orenburg heard about Tsar Alexander II’s visit to that town. Mention of the local connections to the last Romanov tsar, Nicholas II, began to appear on excursions from Smolensk in the west to Barnaul in the east. And worst of all, to those who saw the presocialist past as irrevocably corrupted, some tours celebrated the exploits of nineteenth-century capitalists, such as the excursion in Buriatiia labeled “Ulan-Ude—Merchant City.”<sup>36</sup>

Others sought to protect ancient Russian monuments from encroachment and degradation by tourists. Central officials had begun to develop, in the 1960s, a set of tourist itineraries based on the ancient Russian cities surrounding Moscow, an itinerary they promoted as the Golden Ring, with an eye toward the international as well as the domestic tourist market.<sup>37</sup> The ancient town of Suzdal', with its kremlin and churches, emerged as the center of this

34. *Trud*, 26 June 1969.

35. On historical controversies at the start of the 1960s, see Nancy Whittier Heer, *Politics and History in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA, 1971); E. N. Burdzhakov, *Russia's Second Revolution: The February 1917 Uprising in Petrograd*, ed. and trans. Donald J. Raleigh (Bloomington, IN, 1987); Roger D. Markwick, *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956–1974* (New York, 2001).

36. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 1746, ll. 29–31.

37. *Trud*, 17 December 1970, described in detail the sights along a twenty-day automobile itinerary around these cities.

itinerary, and officials and architects began to plan both its restoration and the construction of a tourist complex that would permit its exploitation as a major tourist attraction. In 1966, three hundred thousand tourists had visited Suzdal', despite the utter lack of any kind of tourist infrastructure there. Now planners and architects proposed to construct a network of motels, hotels, and restaurants and an array of recreational facilities such as sports fields and cinemas, to turn Suzdal' into a first-class tourist destination, a "mecca of Russian tourism." Ancient Russian structures would house themed restaurants featuring bear meat stews and mead beverages, re-creating the ambience and cuisine of old Rus. Purists objected that opening these cities to mass tourism would destroy these unique monuments of culture. Architectural professionals acknowledged that people would prefer to see these great ensembles as individuals rather than in a group, revealed to their gaze only, but the state could not afford to engage in expensive restoration projects without the revenue supplied by mass tourism. And tourists deserved comfort and entertainment as well as knowledge, they insisted.<sup>38</sup>

The consequences of mass tourism could be seen in nature as well as in historical cities, and there were anxieties that tourism through nature was causing ecological harm. At Lake Seliger, warned one tourist in a letter to *Literaturnaia gazeta*, tourists set up their camps, tearing up all the saplings for tent poles, and then moved on, taking their songs and memories with them, leaving behind empty cans, broken bottles, paper, and uprooted trees. "It must be admitted," said a sports society official in 1966, "that not all trips and travels support the goals of Soviet tourism. There are many instances of the wrong attitude toward nature: arson in the woods and senseless destruction of plants. There are cases when outings and trips are transformed into picnics without purpose." The nongovernmental Society for the Protection of Nature gained a seat at the tourism council table in the 1960s in order to defend environmental interests against those of the vandalizing tourists.<sup>39</sup>

As with the campaign against vagrancy in the 1930s, tourist officials in the 1960s worried that unorganized groups of wild tourists were celebrating inappropriate values of hedonism and individualism, undermining the communist project. Individuals who held themselves aloof from the group also violated norms of Soviet tourism. These tourists had been labeled *brodiagi* (tramps) in the press campaigns of the early 1930s, and the phenomenon of vagrancy, purposeless solo traveling, or worse, picnicking, continued to draw criticism in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>40</sup> Quitting the collective on trips abroad compounded the crime of antigroup values by creating security anxieties as

38. M. Orlov, "Mekka russkogo turizma," *LG*, 22 February 1967, 11; Oleg Volkov, "Snova o Suzdale. Restavratsiia ili restoratsiia?," *LG*, 10 April 1968, 10; M. Orlov, "Ne pamiatniki i 'narpit,' a poznanie i otdykh!" and V. Vybornyi, "Izderzhki polemiki i izderzhki praktiki," *LG*, 1 May 1968, 10.

39. *LG*, 25 November 1961, 2; GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 921, ll. 123, 127 (quote); *Trud*, 23 May 1968.

40. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 921, l. 18; d. 447, l. 122; d. 578, l. 137; *Turist*, no. 8 (1969): 2.



well. Reports of group leaders on these trips abroad paid close critical attention to this behavior. It was forbidden even to visit relatives abroad without permission, but many individuals slipped away from the group to visit relatives in the Soviet army, friends made from earlier tourist encounters, or more casual acquaintances. Although group leaders were normally chosen because of their impeccable Party credentials, even one of these notables skipped a celebratory banquet in order to spend a night on the town in Bulgaria. The more comfortable a tourist became with travel abroad, the more likely she was to “see with her own eyes” and go off on her own, rather than travel with a group. When criticized for this behavior, one couple on a Danube cruise retorted that they had paid for the trip with their own money, and they would come and go as they pleased.<sup>41</sup> We see here the old paradox in which travel produced the self-actualizing individual, a social good, but that very self-confidence then led to violation of the norms of socialist collectivism. The stakes were highest, perhaps, on trips abroad, but the tension between discipline enforced mutually by the group and discipline internalized through social norms characterized Soviet tourist practice whether at home or in foreign settings. On the other hand, the solo bicycle feat of Gleb Travin received wide publicity in the 1960s, acknowledging that travel alone could also teach self-reliance and love of the native land.<sup>42</sup>

The overwhelming preference for and growing insistence on the provision of facilities for family vacations reflected this celebration of self-actualization and independence. Independent tourists had long been encouraged to form their own compatible groups to ensure a successful tour. As growing numbers of Soviet citizens gained experience and confidence in their ability to arrange their own mobility through the native land, they wanted to travel with their own selected group, their family, rather than bother with bonding with strangers. The group, with its camaraderie, its collective discipline, and its mutual surveillance, was losing its appeal.

In practice, Soviet tourism by the 1970s had shed the ideological baggage of its proletarian youth and now offered a continuum of opportunities to be and to see elsewhere. A sociological study of tourists at bases in many of the prime tourist areas in 1974 produced thirty-four variants of vacation, according to modes of transportation, with families or without, and the primary goals of the trip. All the respondents agreed that their vacation should connect knowledge with improving one's health, but they disagreed on the extent to which knowledge should be the primary focus, as had been the case since the 1920s. Of the respondents, 26 percent favored a trip that was primarily about knowledge, whether gleaned from museums, architecture, or monuments of culture—the essential tourist vacation. By contrast,

41. GARF, f. 9520, op. 1, d. 421, ll. 20, 30; d. 597, ll. 4, 20, 84; d. 407 (group leader reports, 1961), l. 19; d. 422 (group leader reports, 1961), l. 9; d. 893 (group leader reports, 1965), l. 112; d. 390, ll. 6–7.

42. Kharitonovskii, *Chelovek s zheleznym olenem* (1960 and 1965); Travin, “Bez skidki na vremia.”



22.7 percent asked for an “average amount” of knowledge-producing excursions and minimal medical attention; 21.9 percent preferred a combination of excursions with more physically demanding overnight trips and sports; 23.6 percent favored a vacation spent primarily at ease, with perhaps a brief excursion every day—the classic kurort vacation. Only 4.6 percent wanted unmediated physical hiking and sports, a holdover from the physical culture movement that would eventually be labeled “adventure tourism.” In short, concluded the study’s analyst, two-thirds of Soviet citizens wanted a vacation that expanded their knowledge. At the same time, most of them, even those embracing active tourism, wanted to base their stays in comfortable hotels.<sup>43</sup>

Soviet tourism and vacations thus preserved their original dual mission of purpose and pleasure. As we have seen in chapter 6, the tension between these two goals would continue to divide tourism planners, but increasingly they recognized that the real Soviet tourist could subscribe to any of these variants, and even, over the course of his or her life, to all of them. The modernizing Soviet tourist enterprise sought to respond to these preferences of mature and knowledgeable leisure-time consumers through increased investment and more rational organization. It sought to cater to the needs of individual families in addition to facilitating group travel on trains, boats, and buses. It expanded tourist travel abroad. And it continued to lag in its ability to meet the demand of the Soviet consumer for leisure travel: in announcing what would turn out to be the last five-year plan in 1985, trade union secretary V. I. Smirnov acknowledged that tourist facilities could satisfy only 20 percent of the demand for putevki during the peak season.<sup>44</sup> Abukov pledged in 1986 to increase the scale of tourism services by 48 percent by the year 2000, but he acknowledged, not for the first time and probably not the last, that this “would take time.”<sup>45</sup>

### Epilogue: The Journeys Continue

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation affirmed the right to rest in its article 37; article 27 added something new, the guarantee that every citizen had the right to *travel* freely within the country and abroad. Like the right to rest itself, the semantic distinction between tourism and rest would outlast the Soviet Union. A hiking trip in Karelia was *tourism* and a common experience for Soviet student youth, but a family automobile trip to the Caspian Sea shore was most definitely *rest*, I was told in 2001.<sup>46</sup> For a younger post-Soviet

43. L. Prilutskii, “Slagaemye otdykha,” *Turist*, no. 9 (1974): 19.

44. *Turist*, no. 12 (1985): 2–3.

45. A. Kh. Abukov, “Trebuets vremia,” *Turist*, no. 1 (1986): 1–3.

46. Constitution of the Russian Federation, <http://constitution.garant.ru/rf/>; personal communication with E. I. Pivovarov.

generation, however, a new standard of vacationing had begun to emerge, one that emphasized service, comfort, and pleasure. Just as Western Europeans had colonized the beaches of the Mediterranean from the 1960s, post-Soviet tourists in the 2000s flocked to new resort complexes abroad, particularly on the Mediterranean coasts of Turkey and Crete. A 2005 television serial, *Tourists*, conveyed the new synthesis of tourism and rest and offered viewers a reminder of the difference between Soviet and post-Soviet leisure travel.<sup>47</sup> The tourists in the serial have purchased a commercial twelve-day package tour to a modern and spacious Turkish hotel, offering multiple swimming pools, tennis courts, exercise equipment, sand beach, unlimited food and drink, and optional excursions. A quarreling wife, labeled by other tourists as a *sovok*, a pejorative term for someone with a Soviet mentality, is constantly complaining about high prices and bad service. Because of her intervention, their expensive excursion to a fairytale castle is replaced with a cheaper bus trip to a “fairytale” souvenir district. An aging celebrity actor, hired to make a promotional film for the hotel, becomes fed up with the conditions there and with the bothersome tourists who spoil his fashionable Western polo shirt with their autograph pens. Dressed in a plain replacement T-shirt, he explodes on camera, “This hotel is a madhouse and I can’t stand it anymore!” His tirade becomes part of the new promotional film, which starts with the tantrum, followed by a seductive female voice-over, “If you don’t want to vacation like this [i.e., in Russia], come to Turkey.” The film then cuts to an earlier take in which the actor, in his pristine polo, smarmily extols the features of the hotel. Other attributes of the classic Soviet spa vacation remain the same: the adults spend their time drinking and looking for sexual conquests, and the son of a divorced father keeps witnessing “things that shouldn’t be seen by children”; he is definitely interfering with his father’s good time. A Turkish massovik, oozing with false bonhomie, organizes excursions and evening programs straight out of *365 Games and Leisure Hours*, including a “battle of the sexes” and a contest for the best costumed Mister and Miss Hotel. And at least some of the guests prepare to return to Moscow rested and ready to resume their working lives. Medicine, however, has disappeared from the vacation regime. The only doctors at the hotel are two plastic surgeons from a private clinic in Moscow who are among the tour’s vacationers. In the new Russia, physicians consume leisure opportunities; they do not produce them.

47. *Turisty*, twelve-part serial, dir. Aleksandr Zamiatin, Ren TV, 2005. A sequel aired in 2008.

# Conclusion

## Soviet Vacations and the Modern World

Interwar Europe saw the rise of “social tourism,” a particular vacation category introduced in 1936 when the International Labor Organization adopted the Holiday with Pay Convention (Convention No. 52).<sup>1</sup> Social tourism aimed to provide inexpensive and purposeful vacations for all social classes, but it implicitly privileged the working class, which could not otherwise afford to engage in leisure travel. In 1936 Popular Front France enacted the Lagrange Law, which provided for discounted transportation to vacation destinations, and a network of social tourism institutions developed, emphasizing collectivism, purpose, and politics. Among them, the Family Vacation Villages carried the flag of social tourism into the post-1945 period, coming under the leadership of the French Communist Party in the 1960s and continuing to offer family-centered leisure and collective social and cultural events.<sup>2</sup>

Socialist Yugoslavia also endeavored to provide social tourism opportunities for its newly enfranchised working class in the late 1940s, offering discounted travel, special accommodation units, and holiday allowances to support the entrance of lower-income groups into the world of tourism.<sup>3</sup> Even in Yugoslavia, social tourism functioned alongside and often in competition with commercial tourism organizations. In fact, by the early 1950s, it had yielded to a largely commercial enterprise that targeted foreign visitors above all but that increasingly came to serve the growing Yugoslavia middle class.<sup>4</sup>

In the Soviet Union, from the beginning to the end, all tourism was social tourism. The state legislated vacation opportunities with the paid annual vacation enacted into law in 1922. It subsidized vacation opportunities through its provision of facilities, special rates for transportation, and the social insurance payments administered by the trade unions. In content as

1. This information is from the website of the International Organisation of Social Tourism, <http://www.bits-int.org/en/index.php?menu=1&submenu=1>, which was founded in 1963 to unite independent social tourism organizations from trade unions to work councils.

2. Cross, “Vacations for All,” 611–612; Furlough, “Making Mass Vacations.”

3. Duda, “Workers into Tourists,” 33–68.

4. Ibid., 10; Rory Yeomans, “From Comrades to Consumers: Holidays, Leisure Time, and Ideology in Communist Yugoslavia,” in Grandits and Taylor, *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side*, 72.

well as structure, Soviet tourism and vacations emphasized collectivism, culture, education, and civic engagement. And if the rising Soviet intelligentsia benefited more than others from the new vacation and tourism culture, by the 1960s and 1970s blue-collar workers in Soviet industry also enjoyed vacation opportunities, whether in official sanatoria, rest homes, tourist bases, and cruises or in factory vacation homes, fishing cabins, and sports camps. Agricultural workers, a much larger category of the population in the USSR than in the industrial West, still found access to vacations and tourism strange and difficult to obtain. Both remained a prerogative of urban society. Unlike social tourism in the West, however, Soviet tourism and vacation policy privileged individuals and adults, who were then formed into collectives. The idea of “family vacation villages” remained alien to officials and unavailable to families. The recognition of the demand for family vacations emerged only grudgingly even in the late Soviet period, and a vacation *from* family received support from a large segment of the Soviet public. Most family vacations took place in the Soviet Union outside the network of organized and subsidized leisure travel, relying on informal networks and illegal market relations.

My goal in this book has been to explore how the Soviet regime and its citizens negotiated the search for the good life in the form of leisure travel and to illuminate the lived experience of people under socialism through their vacation practices and the meanings that they attached to travel. The Soviet system, with its communist ideology, its centrally planned economy, and its particularly harrowing outbreaks of political violence, might seem to reflect a unique historical formation, and yet much of the story of Soviet vacations looks similar to patterns elsewhere in the twentieth-century world. By looking at this history over the long duration of the Soviet regime, what can we learn about the nature and historical trajectory of the system as a whole? A history of tourism illuminates some of the factors that led to the regime’s demise: an economic system that failed to fulfill the ever-rising expectations of its urban consumer public, an unmet yearning for freedom to travel within and beyond the nation’s borders, growing tensions among ethnic groups and collectivities that the system failed to integrate. Indeed, there is much more that tourism might reveal about the encounters among the peoples of the Soviet Union and the quasi-imperial relationships that exploded in separatist violence in the late 1980s and early 1990s. On the other hand, this history speaks even more assertively about how the system survived for as long as it did and about the ways in which the institutions of leisure (among many others) provided a sense of material and cultural well-being, created cohesive collectives, and satisfied to some extent the desires of Soviet people to expand their horizons.

This history of Soviet tourism and vacations reinforces an approach to Soviet history that acknowledges its contradictions, its Janus face, and the ambiguity between a glass half empty and one half full. One could emphasize ways in which this history illuminates the illiberal aspects of the Soviet

regime, a state in which the individual's interests were subordinated to the needs of the collective and the state. Soviet vacations and tourism originated in a spirit of state purpose, to provide healthy alternatives in order to discipline unruly youth and to restore the health of workers so they could become more productive. Along with this purposeful mission of medical prophylaxis came a cultural agenda, in which the annual vacation became part of the overall civilizing mission of the Soviet regime.

The illiberal history of the Soviet Union compels us to acknowledge the persistence of stratification and the ways in which privilege dominated over egalitarianism. Privilege continued to assert itself in gaining access to tourist and health spa vacations, and in many ways, leisure travel reinforced social distinctions that an ideology of equality had meant to overcome. The right to an annual tourist or health spa vacation became one of the perquisites of a new Soviet elite, a fact that contradicted the socialist society's original premises. The history of tourism and vacations, furthermore, reveals the failures of the centrally planned economy, its inability to manage its consumer and service sectors. This inability was compounded by the structural barriers of the command-administrative system and the inertia of the bureaucratic mindset, so vividly illustrated by the repetitively boilerplate speeches of the tourism and health resort chiefs year after year. Economic historians have questioned whether the failures of the planned economy under Stalin were due more to the jockey—inept managers—or the horse—the system itself.<sup>5</sup> There is evidence here that both were responsible.

A history of the illiberal side of Soviet tourism might emphasize the ways in which the regime controlled and restricted mobility, from the *putevka* system that rationed access to tourist and health spa vacations to the extensive vetting and monitoring apparatus constraining the trips of Soviet tourists abroad. Enemies and “others” presented constant dangers to the touring public, from the idle vagrants denounced under the label of *brodiazhnichestvo* to the alarming proclivities of Soviet women tourists abroad to engage in sexual relations with foreigners to the culturally offensive dancing that tourists observed. The extensive network of medical personnel and excursion leaders, of rules and regimes, served to cushion Soviet leisure travelers from the responsibilities of independence and helped to reinforce a “nanny state” in which discipline and dependence produced a population of obedience and submission.

This book has shown how Soviet travelers and vacationers operated within this orbit of constraint and ideology, but it is difficult to assess whether their participation represented consent, complicity, and loyalty or whether they consumed these vacations in a mood of alienation and tacit dissent. Did the opportunity to travel and to vacation provide brief moments of escape

5. Paul R. Gregory, *The Political Economy of Stalinism: Evidence from the Soviet Secret Archives* (New York, 2003).

from the constraints of economic scarcities and political control, or did these moments reinforce loyalty to the regime that provided the opportunities? In a powerful passage from her 1981 memoir, the former political prisoner and exile Eugenia Ginzburg explicitly referenced the freely won pleasure that Soviet vacations and tourism experiences had provided. Recalling her walk to freedom on the Kolyma highway, she wrote,

When I search my memory for moments of real, unthinking happiness, I can recall only two. It happened once in Sochi. For no particular reason—simply that I was twenty-two and waltzing on the veranda of the sanatorium with a professor of dialectical materialism, who was some twenty-five years older than I, and with whom our entire class had fallen in love. The second time I managed to grab the Firebird by the tail was the day I have just described, February 15, 1947, on the Elgen-Taskan highway in a blizzard.<sup>6</sup>

One could equally emphasize the ways in which vacation travel developed the capabilities of Soviet citizens to act as individuals and to develop their Soviet selves as modern selves. This too belonged to the regime's official project. The development of a Soviet consumer economy permitted the exercise of choice, the development of taste, and the utilization of consumer goods and services to elaborate personal distinction. Soviet tourists and vacationers expressed clear preferences about the conditions of their vacations, and vacation officials were expected to respond. "We exist for the consumer, the consumer does not exist for us." Even as international travel opened new perspectives on the benefits of travel to see and do, the normative Soviet vacation remained the sedentary sojourn at a spa or rest home, and distinctions between rest and tourism persisted throughout the Soviet period. Consumer choice perpetuated these distinctions. A minority of Soviet vacationers engaged in active tourist trips, whether for physical exploration or for organized sightseeing. The expansion of tourist facilities by the 1970s sought to increase access to the normative stationary holiday facilities, especially for families. As rest and tourism converged, the ideal Soviet vacation would be spent in a place something like Sochi, with grand hotels, sun, sea, activities, good food, and evening pleasures. Even the medical emphasis of Soviet vacations offered personal value for individuals. If the state benefited from improving the health of its labor force, rest, recuperation, and physical well-being attracted Soviet citizens as individuals and family members, not only as workers. MacCannell argues that the tourist stands for "modern-man in general," and Soviet tourists also shared in this project through the free

6. Eugenia Ginzburg, *Within the Whirlwind*, trans. Ian Boland, intro. Heinrich Böll (New York, 1981), 183. For a further exploration of this juxtaposition between pleasure and punitive travel, see Diane P. Koenker, "Pleasure Travel in the Passport State," in *Russia in Motion: Cultures of Human Mobility since 1850*, ed. John Randolph and Eugene M. Avrutin (Urbana, IL, 2012), 235–252.



exercise of where and how to travel, through the knowledge of the world gained through travel, and through the knowledge of self that the experience of travel provided. We have seen that Soviet women in particular took advantage of these opportunities, a quest for liberation that is often obscured by the attention rightly paid to the double burden of women under socialism.

If the history of vacations reveals the failures of the planned economy as a system of economic growth, it also reveals that the system was adaptable and possessed the potential for change. The regime consciously chose to model Soviet health spas on an aristocratic standard of grand scale and luxury: the Soviet proletariat should inhabit palaces, not townhouses. The regime resorted to a succession of administrative solutions in its effort to provide mass access to leisure travel. When the voluntary Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions failed to meet the goals of tourists and the state, the responsibility for tourism passed to the trade unions, which possessed greater authority to mobilize resources. In addition, in 1960, the administration of health spas moved from the Ministry of Health, with its narrow focus on medicine, to the trade unions, again because of their superior organizational capabilities but also because they represented a broader segment of social interests. If officials were slow to recognize the power of demand for family vacations, the system itself provided the opportunity to assess this demand and try to implement changes. But it also created the conditions for bottlenecks that made change very slow.

The periodization of Soviet history conventionally distinguishes the Stalin era from the years that followed and, more controversially, counterposes Khrushchev's liberalization to the economic stagnation and political repression that came to characterize the years under Brezhnev from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s. The history of Soviet tourism and vacations possesses its own trajectory, which tends to soften some of the rigid boundaries between eras. Tourism and health vacations began in the 1920s with a largely purposeful, medical, and state-oriented agenda, but by the mid-1930s the consumers of these journeys had transformed leisure travel into an experience emphasizing individual pleasure, comfort, knowledge, and even escape. Neither the war nor the death of Stalin significantly altered these overall objectives. The inability of the economy to mobilize the resources necessary to expand the opportunities for leisure travel posed a far greater constraint. A significant turning point came in 1955 with the opening of tourist travel abroad. This decision too represented a confluence of state and individual interests. Allowing Soviets to travel abroad signified a vote of confidence by the state in the ability of selected tourists to benefit from the exposure to other cultures, a wager that the comparisons would not become destabilizing. The continued development of the Soviet system depended on knowledge, including knowledge of the world. Purposeful factory-to-factory exchanges were part of this, but so was the way in which foreign travel helped tourists learn how to learn. Increasingly from the mid-1950s the interests of Soviet citizens as consumers came to be represented as the regime's *raison d'être*, a goal confirmed in the 1961 Communist Party program.

From the perspective of Gorbachev's dramatic perestroika, the Brezhnev era seemed stagnant. In fact, however, the consumer economy remained the focus of the Soviet regime, and the years after 1968—the date linked so closely with the repressive assault on dissidence in cultural and political life—saw the greatest expansion of tourism and vacation facilities. A half-empty interpretation might explain this expansion as part of a cynical bargain to distract citizens from their lack of freedom through the provision of goods and services.<sup>7</sup> If the glass is seen as half full, the expansion of leisure travel opportunities represented the good life for the many and not the few, the promise that had animated the socialist revolutionary impulse from its very beginning.

The right to rest (including the right to travel freely in order to rest) constituted only one of the vaunted benefits of the 1936 Soviet Constitution, and yet the right to travel became one of the enduring memories of the late Soviet experience. Among the informants in an oral history of Soviet high school graduates from the class of 1967, memories of travel abroad and around the country appear in every account, along with regret that new borders have bounded the once-unbounded space.<sup>8</sup> The state regulated movement for pleasure, production, and punishment, but it also actively promoted mobility, and in this process it created the autonomous citizen-subject of Lefort's paradox. The accounts of generations of Soviet tourist travelers from the 1920s to the 1980s reiterated the liberating and state-building values of travel: tourists became better acquainted with their native land (including through comparison with others); they made new friendships and cemented family relations; they recovered their physical and mental health. They had a good time. And they learned self-reliance, to live apart from the state's direct tutelage. This was the state's reward to its citizens (as long as they remained loyal to the state), and with the development of the Soviet economy, access to leisure travel became increasingly normal and increasingly independent of state control.

In June 2008 the *New York Times* reported on the transformational effect of pleasure travel, citing the Russian writer Viktor Yerofeyev:

"Through all this travel, we are seeing a change in mentality at home," Mr. Yerofeyev said. "People are now seeking pleasure, whether it is in the night clubs of Moscow or in restaurants. Travel is a continuation of that pleasure. Just to have pleasant lives, not to suffer, to feel positive. Their life compass changes, from 'I don't care about anything' to 'I would like to have a better life.' Travel is a part of this."<sup>9</sup>

7. James R. Millar suggests the Brezhnev regime struck a "little deal" with its citizens, permitting an illegal private market to emerge to satisfy consumer needs in exchange for political passivity. Millar, "The Little Deal."

8. Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation*. While I was conducting this research, informal conversations from archive reading rooms to dinner tables confirmed this regret.

9. Clifford J. Levy, "Free and Flush: Russians Eager to Roam Abroad," *New York Times*, 15 June 2008.

In this realm, the interests of Soviet state and citizen coincided: productivity led to knowledge, pleasure, and freely chosen mobility. But in travel, citizens also began to break free of the state, to take charge of their individual itineraries, and to claim their own autonomy. Yet in the end, perhaps precisely because of this better life, they remained loyal to the state that had enabled their voyages of self-discovery.

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